Gen X women and the Australian Catholic Church: Negotiating religious identity and participation

Tracy McEwan

MTh (Dist.) (Newcastle); BAppSc (Mathematics) (UTS)

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy in Theology

February 2022

This research was supported by an

Australian Government Research Training Program (RTP) Scholarship

Statement of originality

I hereby certify that the work embodied in the thesis is my own work, conducted under normal supervision. The thesis contains no material which has been accepted, or is being examined, for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made. I give consent to the final version of my thesis being made available worldwide when deposited in the University's Digital Repository, subject to the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968 and any approved embargo.

Signed:

Tracy McEwan

Date: 10 February 2022

The research was primarily conducted on the traditional lands of the Gweagal people, a Tharawal speaking clan, whose enduring connection with the land and water is acknowledged and respected.

Acknowledgements

Undertaking doctoral research is a journey and I would like to acknowledge the many people who shared in my journey and encouraged me along the way. First, my grateful thanks to the women who participated in this research and generously shared their stories with me. Without their participation, this thesis would not have been possible.

A huge thank you to my supervisors Dr Kathleen McPhillips and Emeritus Prof. Terence J. Lovat for their guidance, insight, and valuable feedback. Kath, your friendship, enthusiasm, and kindness have been a highlight. Thank you to Prof. Richard Rymarz, Dr Ruth Powell, Dr Robert Dixon, Ass. Prof. Anna Halafoff, Dr Mary E. Hunt, Dr Miriam Pepper, Dr Patricia Madigan OP, and Jacinta Frawley for their thoughtful advice, encouragement, and assistance. Many thanks to Dr Amy Lovat for her work editing this thesis.

Thank you to all my friends and family who have supported me throughout my journey. Special thanks to Pamela Mcdonagh, Jacque Dinklo, Margaret McEwan, and Stephanie McKimm for always listening and believing in me. To Pamela, Margaret, and Susan Brown – thank you for our hikes and the love and laughter along the way. Many thanks to Sharyn and Scott Roberts, Michelle Iona, Natalie Banister, and Trudi Elyard for their ongoing support and encouragement.

It is often the people you meet along the way who make a journey worthwhile. A heartfelt thank you to Michelle Eastwood for the laughs, encouragement, wisdom, and reassurance. Appreciative thanks to Patricia Gemmell, Angela Marquis, Jacqui Remond, Coleen Rowe, Elizabeth Lee, Rebecca Beisler, and Cathie Lambert for the long chats, guidance, and friendship. Thank you to Andrea Dean and the women of *WATAC Inc*. for their assistance and inspiration.

This journey would not have been possible without the unconditional love and unwavering belief of all my family. Many thanks to Joy and Morris Wheeler, Katherine and Warwick McEwan, Maria Cameron, Nicki Balneaves, Lisa Wrightson, and Maria Wheeler RSC. And finally, Lachlan McEwan, Cameron McEwan, James McEwan, and Milo the dog – thank you for loving and encouraging me. I couldn't have done this without you.

Contents

Abstract

Gen X were the first generation to be raised in the Catholic Church in the environment of cultural and theological change brought about by the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965). During the council, the Catholic Church sought to respond to societal shifts and increase its relevance in the modern world. The resultant ecclesial transformations were widely predicted to increase women's involvement in the Catholic Church in Australia. In fact, the opposite transpired. The participation of women is currently at substantially low levels. Gen X Catholic women are less likely than earlier generations to attend Mass and take part in daily devotions. Within a feminist theological framework, this thesis uses a Foucauldian genealogy as the methodological approach to analyse the identities and participation of Gen X women in the Catholic Church in Australia. It will show that magisterial formulations of Catholic identity do not accurately reflect the way Gen X women are enacting Catholicism. Instead, this thesis will argue that Gen X women are negotiating the impact of magisterial ecclesiology and its gendered archetypes. They are expressing their identities and positioning themselves in Catholicism via the performance of technologies of Catholicism and the use of interpretive adjustments. It will reveal that many Gen X women are choosing to de-identify from Catholicism, not because of a loss of faith, but owing to the abuses and harm they experience in official ecclesial spaces. As an alternative, this thesis proposes a feminist ecclesiology grounded in a theology of flourishing and an imaginary of natality. Herein, the biblical promise of wholeness and flourishing can be found in feminist ecclesial spaces, contained and produced in a genealogy of women's *herstories*. These feminist ecclesial spaces are not simply places to "be church"; they are spaces of socio-political alterity where women join together to live and advocate theologies of hope, justice, and flourishing.

Abbreviations

ABS	Australian Bureau Statistics
ABTA	Australian Birth Trauma Association
ACBC	Australian Catholic Bishops Conference
AHRC	Australian Human Rights Commission
CACW	Council for Australian Catholic Women
CPCSA	Clergy-perpetrated child sexual abuse
CPSL	Catholic Professional Standards Limited
CRA	Catholic Religious Australia
CSA	Child sexual abuse
CWC	Catholic Women's Council
DNA	Deoxyribonucleic acid
FLTN	Feminist Liberation Theologians' Network
FUN	Feminists in the Uniting Church
HREC	Human Research Ethics Committee
Gen X	Generation X
IVF	In vitro fertilisation
LGBTIQA+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, questioning, asexual, plus
MOW	Movement for the Ordination of Women
NCE	National Centre for Evangelisation
NCLS	National Church Life Survey
NCPR	National Centre for Pastoral Research
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version[1]

[1] All biblical references in this thesis are from *The New Oxford Annotated Bible: New Revised Standard*

OCW	Ordination of Catholic Women
OPW	Office for the Participation of Women
RCIRCSA	Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse
UN	United Nations
US	United States of America
WATER	Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics and Ritual
WYD	World Youth Day

Version with the Apocrypha (2010).

Vatican documents

CCC	*Catechism*	1997	The catechism of the Catholic Church
CCL	*Code of canon law*	2021	Code of canon law
DV	*Dei Verbum*	1965	Second Vatican Council: Dogmatic constitution on divine revelation
EG	*Evangelii Gaudium*	2013	Apostolic exhortation of the Holy Father Francis on the proclamation of the Gospel in today's world
EV	*Evangelium Vitae*	1995	Encyclical letter of the Supreme Pontiff John Paul II on the value and inviolability of human life
FT	*Fratelli Tutti*	2020	Apostolic letter of the Holy Father Francis on fraternity and social friendship
GS	*Gaudium et Spes*	1965	Second Vatican Council: Pastoral constitution on the Church in the modern world
HV	*Humanae Vitae*	1968	Encyclical Letter of the Supreme Pontiff Paul VI on the Regulation of Birth
II	*Inter Insigniores*	1976	Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith: Declaration on the question of admission of women to the ministerial Priesthood
LG	*Lumen Gentium*	1964	Second Vatican Council: Dogmatic constitution on the Church
LS	*Laudato Si'*	2015	Encyclical letter of the Holy Father Francis on care for our common home

LW	*Letter to Women*	1995	Letter of John Paul II to women
MD	*Mulieris Dignitatem*	1988	Apostolic Letter of the Supreme Pontiff John Paul II on the dignity and vocation of women on the occasion of the Marian year
PT	*Pacem in terris*	1963	Encyclical of Pope John XXIII on establishing universal peace in truth, justice, charity and liberty
SF	*Sensus Fidei*	2014	International Theological Commission "Sensis Fidei in The Life of the Church"
TC	*Traditionis Custodes*	2021	Apostolic Letter issued "Motu Proprio" by Francis on the use of the Roman liturgy prior to the reform of 1970

List of figures

List of tables

Glossary

Antioch *Antioch* was a youth movement based on a peer-to-peer, parish-based, invitational ministry model that rose to prominence in the Catholic Church in Australia during the 1980s (Pirola 1998; Pirola & Pirola 1998; Ryan 2020).

Baby Boomers The Baby Boomer generation precedes Gen X. They are the offspring of the post-World War II baby boom and are defined by the magnitude of their demographic size compared to previous and subsequent generations and the relative prosperity of their upbringing (Mackay 1998; McEwan & McPhillips 2017). For the purposes of this thesis, they are defined as the age cohort born between 1 January 1946 to 31 December 1964.

Baptism Baptism is the first of the seven sacraments of the Catholic Church. It is a sacrament of Christian initiation by which a person (often an infant) receives remission of original and personal sin and begins a new life in Jesus Christ (CCC, para. 1213 ff.).

Beatified A state of public veneration declared after death of a Catholic, which bestows the person the title 'Blessed' (Higgins 2011).

Benediction A liturgical rite of the Catholic Church in which people gathered and are blessed with a consecrated Eucharistic host after a period of exposition (that is, the display of the host for public veneration in a monstrance) (Harrington 2002).

Brothers The term brothers refers to men who, like nuns, undertake a public profession of vows that place them into the permanent state of consecrated life (CCC, para. 914).

Builder generation The Builder or Silent generation are the generational cohort preceding the Baby Boomers (McEwan & McPhillips 2017). For the purposes of this thesis, they are defined as the age grouping born between 1 January 1925 to 31 December 1945.

Canonisation Canonisation is the process by which the papacy declares that a person is a saint, to be venerated by Catholics because of their

place in heaven and ability to intercede on behalf of the living directly with God (Bennett 2011).

Catechesis Catechesis is the education of children, young people, and adults in the doctrine of the Christianity so that they may grow in Christian faith (CCC, para. 5).

Clericalism Clericalism is 'the theological belief that the clergy are different to the laity' (RCIRCSA 2017b, p. 33). It is a misappropriation of male, clerical authority, and 'the idealisation of the priesthood, and by extension, the idealisation of the Catholic Church' (RCIRCSA 2017b, p. 43). Clericalism functions to set ordained clerics apart as unique, superior, and closer to God than non-clerics. It is 'linked to a sense of entitlement, superiority and exclusion, and abuse of power' (RCIRCSA 2017b, p. 43). Clericalism constructs a *kyriarchal* system of relationships that supports the dependency, ignorance, and underdevelopment of the laity (Plante 2020; Radford Ruether 2005).

Communion Holy communion is the reception of the body and blood of Jesus Christ via the Eucharist (CCC, para. 1382). More generally, it is fellowship and union.

Confirmation One of the seven sacraments of the Catholic Church. It is a sacrament of Christian initiation that completes the grace of baptism via a special outpouring of the gifts of the Holy Spirit (CCC, para. 1285).

Consecrated religious Consecrated religious are individual persons and members of religious institutes who consecrate their life to God by making a public profession of vows (known as evangelical counsels) promising a life-long commitment to poverty, chastity, and obedience (CCC, para. 944).

Eucharist One of the seven sacraments of the Catholic Church. It is a sacrament of Christian initiation and the sacramental action of thanksgiving to God that constitutes the principal liturgical

celebration of the pascal mystery of Christ, also known as the Mass (CCC, para. 1322).

Feminine genius theology Feminine genius theology claims that with womanhood comes the gift of "femininity" or certain qualities that represent women's "true nature". Advocates of "feminine genius" theology contend women achieve and live out their "true value" by embodying certain qualities, which include receptivity, sensitivity, generosity, and physical and spiritual maternity (Beattie 2006; MD; Schüssler Fiorenza 2016).

Gender complementarity Gender complementarity is a theological anthropology that describes men and women as embodying contrasting human natures that correspond to distinct, biblically prescribed social roles and responsibilities (Schüssler Fiorenza 2016). It is grounded in the claim that, at creation, God created a complementary anthropology or division in human nature that corresponds with physical sexuality (Johnson 2002b). The doctrine of gender complementarity only became prominent in papal teaching during the twentieth century (Case 2016).

Generation X/ Gen X Gen X (also known as Generation X) is the generation that follows the Baby Boomers. There are no firm agreements on dates for Gen X (Possamai 2009). For the purposes of this research, Gen X is defined as those born between 1 January 1965 and 31 December 1980.

Gen Y Gen Y (also known as Generation Y) is the age cohort or generation that follows Gen X. For the purposes of this research, Gen Y is defined as those born between 1 January 1981 and 31 December 2000 (Possamai 2009).

Kyriarchy Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza coined the term *kyriarchy* to mean the socio-political system of oppression that is based on the rule of the lord/master/father. (See Schüssler Fiorenza 2009.)

LGBTIQA+ Is an acronym that stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer/questioning, asexual, plus. The term is evolving,

and the "plus" signifies other terms (for example, pansexual, non-binary) that people may or may not use to communicate their bodies, gender, sexualities, attractions, relationships, experiences, identities, actions, and/or legal and medical classifications (LGBTIQ+ Health Australia 2019).

Magisterium The magisterium (derived from the Latin word magister or teacher) is the official teaching office of the Catholic Church, which is exercised by the pope and bishops (McBrien 2009).

Mariology Mariology is the theological study of Mary, the mother of Jesus (Beattie 2011).

Mass The Mass is the foremost shared ritual of the Catholic Church and Catholic adherents are obligated by Church law to attend Mass on Sundays (or Saturday evenings) and other specified holy days (CCL, canons. 1247, 1248).

National Church Life Survey (NCLS) Since 1996, every five years, Mass attendees in Catholic parishes in Australia have participated in the National Church Life Survey (NCLS), the largest longitudinal survey of church attendees in the world (Pepper et al. 2018).

New Feminism New Feminism rose to prominence in the mid-1990s in response to John Paul II's call for women to lead cultural transformation as a way 'to acknowledge and affirm the true genius of women in every aspect of the life of society, and overcome all discrimination, violence and exploitation' (EV, para. 99). New Feminism as a discourse proposes equality for women based on the acknowledgement and acceptance of the duties and responsibilities assigned to women by gender complementarity (Case 2016).

Novena A novena is a nine-day prayer offering (Bacchiddu 2011).

Nun Tara Tuttle (2020) proposes that "religious sisters" refers to women in apostolic ministries, with "nuns" being women who reside in cloistered or semi-cloistered monasteries as

contemplatives. Both religious sisters and nuns are consecrated women who take vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience (CCC, para. 914). In this thesis, the terms "nun" and "religious sister" are used interchangeably.

Parish According to Church law, a parish is a "certain community" of Catholic adherents who are "stably established" within a particular diocese, whose pastoral care is delegated (by the diocesan bishop) to a pastor, usually described as a "parish priest". As a general rule, in Australia, a parish is territorial; that is, it includes all the Catholic adherents in a certain geographic area or territory (CCL, canon 518; Dixon 2005).

Religious sister See nun.

Rosary The Rosary is an expression of devotion and form of prayer used by Catholic adherents to honour Mary, the mother of Jesus. The Rosary is a feature of popular Catholicism (CCC, paras. 897, 971). When praying the Rosary, a string of knots or beads is used to count component prayers.

Sacrament A sign or instrument of grace, instituted by Jesus Christ and dispensed to humanity through the work of the Holy Spirit (CCC, para. 774).

Second Vatican Council The Second Vatican Council was an ecumenical council of the whole Catholic Church that was held from 1962 until 1965; it is informally known as Vatican II (Haight 2005).

Silent generation See Builder generation.

Vatican II See Second Vatican Council.

Preface

When I began my research in 2016, I was a weekly Mass attendee, catechist, member of my parish finance committee, and casual employee of the Archdiocese of Sydney. As I write this preface in 2021, just like many of the participants in my research, I am not really sure that I identify as "Catholic" anymore. I often wonder what I might have done back in 2016, when I began researching this thesis, if I had known this would be the outcome at the end of the process.

I am a member of Generation X (hereafter referred to as Gen X). I am part of the cohort that was born and received their Catholic formation after the Second Vatican Council (Vatican II; 1962–1965) without the powerful discourse, ideology, and bond that characterised Catholic culture for earlier generations of Catholic women. I was educated by nuns, many of whom identified as feminist. They and the other women in my sphere of influence taught me that I could achieve whatever I wanted. While "being Catholic" informed how I lived my life and raised my children, it did not greatly impact my life decisions. Prior to undertaking my PhD research, I actively participated in my Catholic parish community, took part in social justice activism, and felt strongly about the rights of women and marginalised groups, but I had not really thought much about feminism or the ordination of women. This would change very quickly once I went public with my intention to study women in the Catholic Church.

Not long after I announced my intention to undertake doctoral study on Gen X women in the Catholic Church, I was taken aside by a manager in my Catholic workplace and warned not to discuss my research with "anyone". A short time later, I was approached by a priest, who knew of my intended study, at a workplace morning tea. After the usual greetings, he questioned me.

‘Tracy, do you know that God made Mary the most holy woman ever?’

‘Um, yes,’ I replied.

‘Yes,’ he persisted, ‘God made Mary the most holy person ever placed on the earth, but he put Joseph in charge of her’.

At the time I was baffled. What was so dangerous about studying Catholic women? What were they afraid I would discover?

This thesis is about Gen X women. It explores Gen X women’s identities and participation in the Catholic Church in Australia through the stories and experiences of the thirty-six participants. Yet, it also tells my story and the stories of countless other Gen X women who day-by-day negotiate lived Catholicism and live out the consequences of not being recognised as a “good Catholic woman”.

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This chapter will introduce the topic and purpose of this thesis. It will set parameters for analysis, present key stakeholder groups, and define some key terms. It will set out the thesis methodology, outline its research aims, objectives, and questions, and describe a chapter-by-chapter outline of the thesis.

1.2 Catholicism in Australia

In this thesis, the Catholic Church in Australia is referred to in the singular. While the Catholic Church does encompass a wide range of organisations, religious institutes, rites, and cultural and language groups in Australia, it is at the same time a singular institution under the guidance of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (ACBC) and the Holy See, with a common doctrine and law (ACBC 2021c).

The Catholic Church is currently a key institution in Australian life. The 2016 Australian census positioned it as the largest religious grouping in Australia, with just over a fifth (22.6 per cent) of the adult population of Australia nominating as Catholic (ABS 2017b). While this represents a small decrease from the preceding census in 2011, the proportion of adult Australians who self-classify as Catholic has remained relatively stable since the 1970s (ABS 2017b; Dixon & Powell 2012). The Catholic Church is one of the largest non-government property owners, by value, in Australia (Millar, Schneiders & Vedelago 2018) and is Australia's principal non-government provider of healthcare, education, and welfare services (Dixon et al. 2017). The Catholic Church has property worth an estimated thirty billion dollars Australia-wide (Millar, Schneiders & Vedelago 2018) and employs 1.8 per cent of the Australian workforce, which amounts to close to

one per cent of the Australian census population (Dixon et al. 2017). Just over half (52.5 per cent) of the Australian census population of Catholics are women (NCPR 2019).

1.3 The situation of Catholic women

In Australia, women make up the majority of Catholic adherents (NCPR 2019), a little over three quarters (77 per cent) of the Catholic workforce (Dixon et al. 2017), and three in every five Mass attenders (Dantis, Reid & Chee 2021). The majority of consecrated religious and people who carry out church-related acts of works and service in Australia are women (ACBC 2021a). Yet, despite their numerical dominance, women are marginalised in Catholicism by patriarchal discourse and a leadership structure wherein decision-making is the prerogative of an all-male episcopacy (CCL, canons. 120, 1379; Hunt 2020; Ross 2013). This thesis contends there is an increasing need to contextualise women's participation and identities in Catholicism in terms of their situation in a socio-historical community and *kyriarchal* institutional structure. Women's lives, however, are diverse, and women's participation and experiences of marginalisation are often interwoven into other experiences of oppression and subjugation (Schüssler Fiorenza 2016).

1.4 Intersectionality and *kyriarchy*

In this thesis, the participation and identities of Gen X women are understood and interpreted through a feminist framework of intersectionality and *kyriarchal* analysis. The theoretical field of intersectionality was introduced by Kimberlé Crenshaw to describe how the dynamics of sameness and difference function to extend or limit oppressions when individual characteristics and subjectivities "intersect" with one another and overlap (Cho, Crenshaw & McCall 2013). Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (2009, 2016) conceived the concept of *kyriarchy* to point to the complex pyramidal system of

intersecting multiplicative, socio-political relations of domination and subordination, that marginalise women and all who are marked as inferior or dependent by notion of race, class, age, gender, sexuality, nationhood, or culture. Catholic tradition and scripture have their origins in *kyriarchal* societies and male-centred cultures. The concepts of *kyriarchy* and intersectionality are important, especially in the way they are expressed in many linguistic, cultural, and ritual practices that purport to make sense of and shape social reality for women in Catholicism (Schüssler Fiorenza 2016).

1.5 Gen X women and the Catholic Church

This thesis will analyse and synthesise issues related to Gen X women's participation and identities in Catholicism. Herein, this thesis uses the concept of generation, not to homogenise Gen X women, but to conceptualise their social, historical, and cultural situation within the Catholic Church in Australia. The term Gen X was popularised by Douglas Coupland (1991) to indicate the demographic cohort that follows the Baby Boomer generation. The phenomenon of Gen X is cultural rather than chronological (Beaudoin 1998).

Gen X was the first generation raised in Catholicism in the post-Vatican II era. Vatican II brought about transformations in liturgical and sacramental practice that profoundly impacted Catholic culture in Australia and fundamentally altered the way women encounter Catholicism (Ormerod 2014). Theological, institutional, and liturgical changes that occurred after Vatican II were widely predicted to inspire women and increase their church participation (Hinsdale 2015). However, the expected growth in women's participation never occurred.

In Australia, a growing majority of Catholic women are moving away from Mass as their primary expression of Catholic identity (Dantis, Reid & Chee 2021). Furthermore,

there are significant generational declines in church-based participation, with fewer Gen X women attending Mass than previous cohorts of women (McEwan 2018). Understanding the participation and identities of Gen X women in the Catholic Church in Australia has the potential to give insight into the multifaceted relationship between gender, identity, and participation for not just Gen X women, but also for ensuing generations.

1.6 Feminist theologies

Feminist theologies are 'women's faith seeking understanding in the matrix of historical struggle for life in the face of oppressive and alienating forces' (Johnson 2002b, p. 18). In feminist theologies, the experiences of women are understood to be an important source of empowerment against gender oppressive traditions, ideologies, and practices (Dunn 2015). Feminist theologies and ecclesiologies seek to engage in conversation with women's lives to (1) unmask the dynamic of women's oppression; (2) search for ignored, supressed, and/or alternative wisdoms; and (3) articulate and envision the emancipation of women toward flourishing (Johnson 2002b). Each of these undertakings must take account of the intersectionality and multidimensional character of individual women's lives and the heterogeneous nature of their theological and other experiences. Thus, the diverse nature of Gen X women's lived experiences will be taken account of in this thesis and analysis will be both respectful and sympathetic to women's differences. The theological perspective of feminist theologies is grounded in the lived experiences of women and the understanding of feminism as a movement for societal and ecclesial change (Schüssler Fiorenza 1996). This thesis will draw on the stories and experiences of Gen X women with a view to investigate what factors are impacting their identities and participation in Catholicism.

1.7 A Foucauldian genealogy

This thesis seeks to look beyond Catholicism as a monolithic, top-down, institutional authority to permit an exploration of the multi-layered influences, experiences, and knowledges that work together to explain Gen X women's identities and participation. Michel Foucault's (1980) theory of the relationship between power and knowledge moves the analysis of identities beyond any relativistic notion of the Catholic Church as the sole agent of *kyriarchal* power and women as the oppressed person (Foucault 1980; Schüssler Fiorenza 2016). Foucault (1977, 1980, 2010a) contends that nothing, including concepts, categories, and institutional systems of power/knowledge that can appear fundamental, need simply be accepted. He proposes that a refusal to accept what is presented as natural, necessary, or normal creates possibilities for developing alternative modes of thought and existence (Taylor 2009).

Foucault developed genealogy as a method and methodological approach to provide an account of how power and knowledge operate and constitute subjectivity in relation to a practice and/or institution (Jordan 1999). Foucault (1977, 1988a, 1990a, 1990b, 2021) uses genealogy as a method to analyse the development of societies and their institutions, encapsulating how patterns of power and resistance function over time to create subjectivity. Within a framework of feminist theology, this thesis will use a Foucauldian genealogy to analyse the doctrines, structures, actions, and practices of the Catholic Church in dialogue with the multifaceted experiences of Gen X women in Australia.

1.8 Research aims and objectives

This thesis aims to interpret and understand the ways in which Gen X women in Australia are engaging with Catholicism and using ritual, devotion, and other practices to express their Catholic identities. It has the following objectives:

1. To determine whether institutional formulations of Catholic identity accurately reflect the lived reality of Gen X Catholic women's *praxis*.

2. To establish a range of principal factors that contribute to Gen X women choosing whether to identify with or distance themselves from Catholicism in Australia.

3. To investigate and formulate a theological and ecclesial vision for church that might provide Gen X women a place to "be church" and belong to a community of faith.

1.9 Research questions

This research will respond to the following research questions:

1. Do institutional formulations of Catholic identity accurately reflect the lived reality of Gen X Catholic women's *praxis*?

2. What are the ways in which Gen X women in Australia engage with Catholicism and use ritual and *praxis* to express their Catholic identity?

3. What principal factors contribute to Gen X women choosing whether to identify with or distance themselves from Catholicism in Australia?

4. What theological and ecclesial vision for church might provide Gen X women a place to "be church" and belong to a community of faith, and flourish?

1.10 The structure of the thesis

Some chapters in this thesis are longer than others to accommodate vignettes that provide short narrative accounts from a selection of study participants. Rather than isolating the

participants' stories in a separate appendix, this method presents stories directly alongside the critical analysis permitting richer engagement between analysis and experience.

Chapter One: Introduction offers an introduction to the topic and scope of the thesis. It presents and describes the significance of the thesis, defines key terminology, and provides a brief outline of the thesis' content and structure.

Chapter Two: Identity and authority addresses the questions "What constitutes a Catholic identity?" and "Who has the authority to determine if a Catholic identity is genuine?" The chapter presents the argument that Gen X women in the Catholic Church are both products and acting subjects of the power/knowledge regime of Catholicism. It uses a feminist framing of women's identities, to establish that Gen X women use their agency to enact lived Catholic identities that negotiate the magisterium's edicts and the reality of their own embodied experiences.

Chapter Three: Generation and formation describes the contextual backdrop against which Gen X women in Australia construct their identities. The chapter provides an analysis of key literature related to Gen X women in both the secular and Catholic sphere. It argues that there is a growing divide between the convictions of official Catholicism and lived reality of Gen X Catholic women in Australia.

Chapter Four: Magisterial ecclesiology: Virgin, bride, mother explores the use of imagery and language in post-conciliar magisterial ecclesiology. The chapter argues that the magisterium's advancement of Mary, the mother of Jesus, in a sexualised, disembodied ecclesiology establishes hierarchical-clerical power and assembles an ecclesiology that locates the salvation of women in their compliance to certain gendered roles that uphold their receptive and subordinate position in Catholicism.

Chapter Five: Theorising power/knowledge for a feminist study of women in Catholicism explores how a Foucauldian understanding of power/knowledge can be used in this feminist theological study of Gen X women to investigate and deconstruct *kyriarchal* structures in Catholicism. It proposes that Michel Foucault's conceptions of technologies of self and practices of freedom, together with Judith Butler's theory of performativity, produce a theoretical framework to critique existing norms and values that constitute Gen X women's subjectivity, and to introduce and extend opportunities for women's self-reflexivity and agency within Catholicism. The chapter develops the concept of technologies of Catholicism.

Chapter Six: Methodology and research design begins with a survey of existing research on Gen X women in the Catholic Church in Australia and establishes a significant research gap. The chapter then introduces the notion of a Foucauldian genealogy as a methodological base for this thesis. It argues that genealogy presents an effective method and methodological approach to analysis of the narratives of Gen X women. The chapter then outlines the research design of the study on which the thesis is based and introduces the group of Gen X women who are the study's participants.

Chapter Seven: Invented identities: Gen X women in Catholicism uses the methodological approach of genealogy to present an analysis of data from the interviews conducted with the Gen X women who are study participants. The chapter develops the term interpretive adjustment and uses the concept in conjunction with technologies of Catholicism to shed light on the ways participants engage with Catholicism to express their Catholic identities and attain, sustain, and subvert recognisability in Catholicism.

Chapter Eight: The consequences of a lack of recognisability explores the consequences of a lack of recognisability and positions Gen X women in official Catholicism using the theoretical concepts of monster, vulnerability, and wilfulness. The

chapter then explores Gen X women's narratives of harm and suffering and uses them to conceptualise the term everyday spiritual abuses. It argues these abuses, which are a quotidian part of life for Gen X Catholic women, are brought about by vulnerability and judgements of wilfulness. It concludes that everyday spiritual abuses have a significant impact on Gen X women choosing whether to identify with or distance themselves from Catholicism in Australia.

Chapter Nine: A place where Gen X women might flourish begins with an analysis of the official Catholic Church as a place of ambiguity for Gen X women. It argues that the implicit goal of official Catholic ecclesiology and theology is to compel women towards a certain performance of womanhood wherein suffering is conceived necessary for salvation in Christ. The chapter proposes an alternative feminist ecclesiology grounded in a theology of flourishing and an imaginary of natality. It contends this reimagined ecclesiology is produced in a genealogy of women's stories. It argues Gen X women require ecclesial spaces such as these where women can find each other, celebrate each other's stories, and flourish.

Chapter Ten: Conclusion provides an overall summary, synthesis, and critique of the thesis findings and indicates areas for future research.

1.11 Conclusion

In this introduction, the topic and focus of this thesis has been presented and, in doing so, a range of key terms, issues, and stakeholder groups have been introduced, including: the Catholic Church in Australia; Gen X; intersectionality; and *kyriarchy*. This introduction has described the methodological approach of the thesis, together with its research aims, objectives, and questions. It has set out the thesis structure and given a brief outline of each chapter's purpose and content. In the next chapter, the questions: "What constitutes

a Catholic identity?" and "Who has the authority to determine if a Catholic identity is genuine?" will guide analysis and provide a framework to explore how identities within Catholicism are constructed and performed.

Chapter Two: Identity and authority

> *A couple of years ago, just after I began to research this thesis, I attended a conference for Catholic youth ministers in Brisbane. Not knowing many of the attendees, I sat near a group of women at lunch and joined their conversation. They began to discuss research about Catholic women, referring only to Mass attendees. I interjected and asked whether they had considered women who are Catholic but no longer attend Mass. A woman in the group replied, 'People who do not attend Mass, do not deserve to be able to call themselves Catholic'.*

2.1 Introduction

This chapter explores two questions raised in the epitaph that are central to this project: "What constitutes a Catholic identity?" and "Who has the authority to determine if a Catholic identity is genuine?" Too often there is an assumption that a "religion" is a group or community of individuals, more-or-less organised, who share a belief system and a set of rituals and practices (Hurd 2015; McGuire 2002; Stringer 2013). This understanding posits that a valid or authentic "religious identity" is the enactment of a restricted set of institutionally defined, legitimate, "ideal" beliefs, behaviours, and ritual practices (Eccles 2018; Hervieu-Léger 2000; McGuire 2008). As the structures of authority in religious organisations and institutions are typically male, women have little agency in the establishment or maintenance of these boundaries of religious identification (McGuire 2002). Women's involvement in religious organisations and institutions is often limited by particularised understandings of gender and sexuality, which legitimise and reinforce essentialist conceptions of identity (McGuire 2002; Schüssler Fiorenza 2016).

In Catholicism, identity and subjectivity are naturalised through a cultural and socio-political doctrinal framework through which adherents make sense and meaning.

Discourses governing Catholic women circulate and are regulated to maintain *kyriarchal* subject positions and mindsets (Schüssler Fiorenza 2016). A symbolic, idealised female body and essentialist formulations of motherhood and femininity locate womanhood in relation to the enactment of particularised gendered roles and responsibilities (Ross 2013). This diminishes women's status and participation. Many women leave Catholicism, not because they have abandoned their faith, but because of conflict with teaching and doctrine around gender and sexuality (Beattie 2018; Macdonald et al. 1999). Others stay and attempt to negotiate the paradox and ambiguity of the co-mingling of sacramentality, grace, and misogyny that characterises contemporary Catholicism (Beattie 2018; Macdonald et al. 1999).

The impacts of discourses around sexuality and gendered identities in Catholicism extend far beyond the pastoral concerns of the Catholic Church. In Australia, the rise of post-secularism has positioned Catholicism in the public sphere, meaning that there is no stable boundary between the public and private for Catholic women (McPhillips 2016). The Australian government's exemption of religious organisations from certain sections of human rights laws and anti-discrimination legislation enables religions to enact gender politics in their employment practices and service provisions (McPhillips 2015, 2020). Gender relations in Catholicism determine which public and private spaces can be occupied by men and which are allocated to women; 'this in effect allows a particular (masculinist) theological interpretation of faith tradition to be understood as the definition of religion' (McPhillips 2020, p. 29). Feminist theologies do critically analyse and contest essentialist conceptions and identity positions relating *kyriarchal* inscriptions on women's space (Abraham 2019; Schüssler Fiorenza 2016). Naomi Goldenberg (2014), however, claims that what feminist studies have failed to do is deconstruct and contest religion as a fixed category in a similar manner. She contends that unless sex and religion

are ‘deconstructed concurrently, their vocabularies end up reinforcing complacent notions of each category and can encourage a regressive trajectory for theory and critique’ (Goldenberg 2014, p. 253). I agree and argue that religious identity as a fixed, universal category or social fact requires deconstruction and critique.

Michel Foucault’s theory of the relationship between power and knowledge contests the notion of identity as a contingent, immutable category or historically contingent part of society (Foucault 1977, 1980, 2010b). Foucault (1980) argues identities are formed when truth, power, and knowledge interact to constitute subjectivity. In this chapter, I draw on Foucault’s notion that identities are discursively constructed and performed within a network of knowledge and power to claim that religious identities are not fixed but instead are created from a complex matrix of cultural understandings, and institutional and individual beliefs, experiences, and practices. Then, through an analysis of key literature around Catholic identity, I look beyond a relativistic notion of Catholicism as a monolithic, institutional, top-down force to propose that Gen X women construct, negotiate, and perform their Catholic identities through a multi-layered network of institutional authority, lived experiences, and personal autonomy.

2.2 How are religious identities formed?

Religious institutions and scholars of religion often seek to establish boundaries around what constitutes a legitimate “religious identity”. Yet, what individuals nominate as their “religion” or “religious identity” and what their beliefs, practices, and religious community look like and mean to them, does not always fit neatly with any institutional or scholarly expectation (McGuire 2002, 2008; Stringer 2013). One of the difficulties with recent scholarship in the area of Gen X women’s identities in Catholicism is that much of the research focuses on institutionalised, church-orientated practices and beliefs

(McEwan 2018; McEwan & McPhillips 2017). The relative specificity of these studies means that a wide range of religious and spiritual behaviours are not included as measurable criteria of Catholic identities. Consequently, previous studies have limited use in understanding the dynamics of theological and sociological change in Catholicism.

In sociological literature, a group of scholars has developed the notion of lived or everyday religion to theorise how religious or spiritual attitudes, identities, beliefs, and practices are experienced in everyday life, both in concert with and in opposition to authoritarian discourses (Hall 1997; Hurd 2015; McGuire 2008, 2016). David Hall (1997) coined the expression "lived religion" to describe how religion is expressed in daily life, through everyday practices, rituals, and encounters in a particular context and social setting. Meredith McGuire (2008) maintains that the concept of lived religion, 'is useful for distinguishing the actual experience of religious persons from the prescribed religion of institutionally defined beliefs and practices' (p. 8). Lived religion, however, does not place boundaries on the sacred and profane (McGuire 2008). It incorporates how the material body encounters the spiritual in everyday embodied practices and experiences, taking seriously 'the multitude of individual ways by which ordinary people remember, create, adapt, mix, and share the "stories" out of which they live' (McGuire 2016, p.154). The concept of lived religion encourages a view of religion beyond any formally recognised institutionalised or authoritarian narrative that might dictate what is or is not religious.

In her study of the politics of religious freedom and violent extremism, Elizabeth Shakman Hurd (2015) extends previous theories of religion and develops a heuristic tool to draw attention to not just different forms of religiosity and sociality, but also to how religious narratives might be constructed and governed by authoritarian and other discourses. Hurd (2015) disaggregates religion into three distinct categories: expert

religion, governed or official religion, and lived religion. She describes *lived or everyday religion* as:

> religion as practiced by ordinary individuals and groups as they interact with a variety of religious authorities, rituals, texts, and institutions and seek to navigate and make sense of their lives, connections with others, and place in the world. It is a diverse field of activity, relations, investments, belief, and practices that may or may not be captured in the set of human goings-on that are identified as religion for the purposes of generating expert knowledge or meeting the aims and objective of governance. (Hurd 2015, p. 3)

Hurd's category of lived religion is meant to direct attention to everyday practices that sit both within and beyond the confines of expert, and official or governed religion. *Expert religion* is defined by Hurd (2015) as 'religion as construed by those who generate policy-relevant knowledge about religion, including scholars, policy experts, and government officials' (p. 2). Expert religious narratives are used in academic disciplines, such as sociology and political science, and tend to define religion as a specific, isolable object, 'construed as normative, singular, and prior to other human affiliations and forms of sociality' (Hurd 2015, p. 11). Hurd (2015) advises that her category of *governed or official religion* refers to 'religion as construed for the purposes of law and governance by those in positions of political and religious authority' (p. 2); this includes global and local governments and religious organisations and institutions at all levels.

For the purposes of this thesis, I am separating and extending Hurd's (2015) categories of governed and official religion. I classify *official* religion as authoritarian discourse set out by religious organisations for the purpose of overseeing and regulating adherents. Official religious narratives use institutionally prescribed markers of belief and practice as the core indicators of religious identity. This aligns with the scholarship of McGuire (2002), who delineates official religion in the following way:

> a set of beliefs and practices prescribed, regulated, and socialised by organised specifically religious groups. These groups set norms of belief and action for their members, and they establish an official model of what it means to be "one of us". (p. 104)

I define *governed* religion as discourse used by local and international governments for the purpose of managing and controlling official religious organisations and, by association, their adherents. I contend that lived, expert, governed, and official religion each have separate but entwined narratives and purposes, and that they can act effectively as a scaffold to theorise the discursive frameworks that Gen X women use to construct, negotiate, and perform their Catholic identities.

2.3 Categorising religious identities

Several scholars have come up with metaphors to describe and theorise the nature of religious identities that sit beyond expert, governed, or official narratives in Christian religious organisations (Davie 1994; Day 2011; Voas 2009). For instance, Grace Davie (1994, 2000) coined the phrase "believing without belonging" to describe people in Britain who tend not to attend church or score highly in other quantitative measures of religiosity but 'have not abandoned many of their deep-seated religious aspirations' (Davie 2000, p. 8). David Voas (2009) uses the term "fuzzy fidelity" to depict a group of Europeans who, according to standard expert measures of religiosity, 'are neither regular churchgoers nor self-consciously nonreligious' (p. 155). Voas (2009) argues that, despite casual loyalty and residual involvement in Christianity, religion still plays a role in the lives of this cohort. Both the terms "believing without belonging" and "fuzzy fidelity" suggest that individual identities that do not comply exactly with the parameters set by official religion are somehow a *non bona fide* microcosm of a grand narrative. I argue that religious belongings, beliefs, and behaviours find expression in a multiplicity of

combinations and orderings of meaning that are elaborated independently or in harmony with official and expert religious narratives.

Abby Day (2011) uses the term "performative belief" to theorise the process or performative act of claiming Christianity as a social identity. For Day (2011), Christian identity 'is not pre-formed but a lived, embodied performance, brought into being through action and where the object of worship is not an entity such as a god or "society," but the experience of belonging' (p. 194). This locates religious identification as a relational social marker vulnerable to misinterpretation (Day & Lee 2014). In a discussion regarding her participants who claim a Christian identity, Day (2011) observes the following:

> To be a Christian, for them, did not include participating in liturgy or ritual, or engaging with Christian principles such as faith in God, the resurrection, or the life of Jesus. It was an ascribed identity from which they could not apparently disassociate themselves. The criteria of ascription and, therefore, criteria for membership, varied during the interviews: sometimes, it only required being "named" through baptism; sometimes it was conferred by attending church when children; sometimes it was only by being born into what was described as a Christian country and therefore becoming a member of the Christian "culture". (p. 180)

Day (2011) cautions against regarding this type of self-identification as notional or irrelevant. She contends that 'nominalism is far from an insignificant, empty category but a social, performative act, bringing into being a specific kind of Christian identity' (Day 2011, p. 174). The location of the process of identification in a performative social act acknowledges Christian identities as socially constructed knowledge.

2.4 What is a Catholic identity?

The notion that the Catholic identities of Gen X women are both performative and socially constructed is central to this thesis. Theoretically, the universal nature of Catholicism ought to ensure a uniform continuance of belief and ritual practice (Hervieu-Léger 2000).

Yet, there is no single normative expression of Catholic beliefs, practices, and characteristics common to all Catholic adherents (Noseda 2008). I argue that as socially constructed knowledges, Catholic identities are not atomistic or fixed and immutable, but are instead embedded in socio-historical and structural contexts, lived and embodied experiences, and individual, institutional, and cultural power relations and legitimations.

There is increasing recognition among theologians and sociologists of religion that, under the canopy of the Catholic Church, there is a plurality of everyday, lived Catholic identities (Beaudoin 2011; Bullivant 2019; Hervieu-Léger 2000). Even so, there is an ideological struggle in expert and official Catholicism over what constitutes a legitimate Catholic identity. In Catholicism, an official narrative attempts to dictate what it constitutes as authentic Catholic belief and practice by prioritising the hierarchical nature of the Catholic Church and privileging declarations of the magisterium (Beaudoin & Hornbeck 2013).

The *magisterium* (derived from the Latin word magister or teacher) is the official teaching office of the Catholic Church, which is exercised by the pope and bishops (McBrien 2009). It assumes the task of ensuring the Church's fidelity to the teachings of the apostles in matters of faith and morals (CCC, paras. 85, 890). The magisterium sets out in Church law and its catechism that an essential criterion for membership of the Catholic Church is receipt of the sacrament of baptism (CCC, para. 1272; CCL, canon. 204). Accompanying Catholic baptism is a set of irrevocable obligations of heart, mind, and action (CCL, canons. 208-31). Central to magisterial teachings and Catholic baptismal obligations is the regular reception of the Eucharist and participation in the sacramental life of the Catholic Church (CCC, paras. 1324-1327; LG, para. 11). The Mass, as a Eucharistic celebration, is Catholicism's principal communal ritual (CCC,

paras. 1328-1332), and Catholic adherents are obliged by Church law to attend Mass on Sundays (or Saturday evenings) and other specified holy days (CCL, canons. 1247, 1248).

In Australia, the local parish is considered by expert and official Catholicism as the centre of Catholic community participation and ritual practice (Dixon 2005; Lewins 1977). Catholic adherents who are actively living a "Catholic life" are generally considered to be those who attend Mass each week and participate in the sacramental life of a parish (Beaudoin 2011). Yet, by these measures, the Catholic Church in Australia is currently facing a crisis of identity and participation.

Data around parish involvement and Mass attendance shows that most self-identifying Catholics in Australia rarely or never attend Mass or participate in sacramental life in parishes (Dantis, Reid & Chee 2021; NCPR 2019). The 2016 ACBC National Count of Attendance[2] revealed that the number of people attending Mass in a Catholic parish 'on a typical weekend was about 623,400, or 11.8 per cent of the Catholic population' (Dantis, Reid & Chee 2021, p. i). This was a drop of 5.9 per cent, or around 39,000 people, from the 2011 figures (Dantis, Reid & Chee 2021). Some fifteen years earlier, in 2001, 15.3 per cent of Australia's Catholic population regularly attended Mass in a Catholic parish (Dixon, Kunciunas & Reid 2008). In recent years, the National Church Life Survey (NCLS) has shown that although women outnumber men in Catholic congregations, there has been a notable decline in the percentage of women participating in Catholic parishes, with women from Gen X significantly less likely than women of the Baby Boomer and Builder generations to attend Mass (McEwan 2018; Powell et al. 2016). In addition to a decline in Mass attendance, Australia has experienced a steady decrease

[2] The 2016 ACBC National Count of Attendance was carried out over four Sundays during May 2016 to ensure that attendances at fortnightly or monthly Masses, common in rural areas and in non-parish settings, were included. Attendance was counted at all Masses (and Sunday assemblies in the absence of a priest), wherever they were held, including in parishes, other Mass centres, hospitals, nursing homes, prisons, religious houses, universities, boarding schools, and other chaplaincies (Dantis, Reid & Chee 2021).

in sacramental practice in parishes. The 2019 Vatican statistics relating to the conferring of the sacraments of baptism, marriage, first communion, and confirmation in Australia show a reduced level of participation compared to previous years (NCPR 2021).

Despite the majority of Catholic adherents in Australia – including Gen X women – rarely or never attending Mass, expert and official Catholicism still uses church attendance as the core indicator for Catholic identity, overlooking other forms of lived *praxis* (Dantis, Reid & Chee 2021; McEwan 2018; McEwan & McPhillips 2017). Catholics who are absent from parish sacramental life and/or are occasional, rare, or nearly never Mass attendees are often referred to in official Catholic and expert, academic literature (and indeed by themselves) as "lapsed", "recovering", "non-practicing", "secular", "religiously illiterate", "relativistic", "inactive", "bad", "fallen away", or "nominal" Catholics (Beaudoin 2011). These terms infer a type of "fuzzy fidelity" or "believing without belonging". Yet, Abby Day (2011) argues that such associations and identities can be 'deeply cultural, located, and loaded' (p. 177) and should not be dismissed as 'always soft, fuzzy, vague, minimalist, or, even, benign' (p. 177). Catholic adherents who do not attend Mass are often judged as "flawed" by magisterial discourse and other Catholics. Furthermore, Tom Beaudoin (2011) cautions against grouping Catholics 'under moralistic categories that do not reflexively call normative Catholic identity and praxis into question' (p. 25). Catholic identities are socially constructed and therefore should not be judged as lacking. I argue that no Catholic self-identification should be dismissed or discounted as nominal, notional, or irrelevant.

There are still Catholic adherents from Gen X who prioritise the hierarchical character of Catholicism and find deep joy, value, and meaning in the surrender to magisterial authority. A small yet significant minority of Gen X women are active and visible in Catholic communities (McEwan 2018; McKinley & Webber 2012). This group

finds meaning in Mass attendance and sacramental participation and claims a strong connection to Catholic culture (McKinley & Webber 2012). A recent study of church-attending Catholic women showed apparent growth in some measures of Gen X religiosity between 2006 and 2016 (McEwan 2018). Parishes, new ecclesial movements, and other organisations that foster a connection to official Catholicism can provide adherents with a plausibility structure to support more orthodox beliefs and practices in a pluralistic world (Beaudoin & Hornbeck 2013; McGuire 2002).

As a religious tradition, Catholicism is both voluntary and interpretive, so Catholic adherents enjoy a certain autonomy of construction that transcends – and is outside the control of – official Catholicism (Dillon 1999). Catholic identities are typically a simultaneous counterbalance of official and lived Catholic narratives that are 'largely determined by the self and not Church authority' (Dillon 2018, p. 17). In this context, invoking the authority of official Catholicism is a deliberate choice, a way of being and self-identifying that is tied to and sustained by, among other things, a religious chain of memory (Hervieu-Léger 2000). Magisterial and other institutional discourses circulate in the following way:

> [through] a network of faith-managers (including, but not limited to, bishops, theologians and pastoral workers) who through their actions make orthodoxy to be something real and central for Catholic faith – that is, they make normativity normative through ways of teaching and governing that contribute to fashioning the level of Catholic subjectivity in "ordinary," lay Catholics. (Beaudoin & Hornbeck 2013, p. 40)

Yet, through a series of decisions and considerations that evolve with and against official Catholic discourse, "ordinary", lay Catholic adherents ultimately decide what they consider a valid Catholic subjectivity and identity based on their own religious and cultural socialisation (Beaudoin & Hornbeck 2013).

2.5 Researching Catholic women's identities

Religious identities are fluid and complex; therefore, research into the lives of women is more meaningful when it looks beyond standardised models of belief and practice (Ammerman 2014). Research on how women negotiate their identities within Catholicism has established that women will contextually juxtapose agency and compliance to doctrine and Church law when constructing their Catholic identities (Calderón Muñoz 2016; Dillon 1999; Leming 2007). In a study of diversity in individual adherents who retain their Catholic identities while denouncing official Catholic teachings, Michele Dillon (1999) uses the notion of a socially constructed reality to explain that it is through the reality of everyday life experiences that Catholic adherents gain knowledge and form their identities. In her study of Catholic women in the U.S., Laura Leming (2007) explains how this understanding, often referred to as religious agency, allows individuals to build an autonomous identity that challenges and is separate from a traditional or official Catholic identity that was once seen as permanent and absolute. This aligns with the findings of María Calderón Muñoz (2016), who notes that, in Ecuador, it is a woman's class, ethnicity, and 'past experiences as women, wives, mothers and professionals as well as inner processes of self-reflexivity' (p. 34) that provides women with agency within a religious organisation and assists them in constructing Catholic identities disconnected from official teachings.

Catholic women's identities are constructed and performed from a complex mix of cultural, institutional, and theological discourses. Calderón Muñoz (2016) explains that the women in her study are not blindly guided by Catholicism but use experience to form knowledge and give themselves agency in life decision-making. Leming (2007) describes the flexible strategies that Catholic women use to obtain knowledge and agency as they negotiate a matrix of power and resistance to navigate valued identities. Dillon (2018)

observes that it is a disturbance of who and what defines knowledge, and how it is organised within society and in Church practices that leads to the questioning of the Catholicism as a single locus of authority and identity.

2.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, the questions "What constitutes a Catholic identity?" and "Who has the authority to determine if a Catholic identity is genuine?" have guided analysis. I have argued that Gen X Catholic women are both products and acting subjects of the power/knowledge regime of Catholicism. Their identities within Catholicism are constructed and performed simultaneously from a negotiation of cultural understandings, individual experiences, and institutional authority. I have established that the acknowledgement of only official institutional practices, such as Mass attendance, ignores everyday, lived *praxis*. Gen X women use their agency to negotiate and perform Catholic identities in various ways. A feminist framing of women's identities in Catholicism, centred in the reality of embodied experiences, both official and lived, will permit individual narratives, rather than the magisterium's edicts, to be the locus for this theological study of identity and participation.

Chapter Three: Generation and formation

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I argued that Gen X women construct, negotiate, and perform their identities in Catholicism through a complex grid of institutional authority, personal autonomy, and lived experiences. This grounds Catholic identities in both the lived reality of embodied experiences and official Catholicism. In this chapter, I further explore the notion of identities as socially constructed knowledges. Having established that Catholic identities are formed, bound, and influenced by a complex mix of socio-historical contexts and power relations, I use the concept of generation to locate and contextualise the social, historical, and cultural situation of Gen X Catholic women. This is not an attempt to homogenise the group or imply a universality of experience; rather, it is an acknowledgement of a shared chronological history and collective memory that sits alongside other aspects of self, such as gender, class, race, sexuality, and ability. Accordingly, this chapter will contextualise and position Gen X women as a cohort with a shared socio-historical and cultural situation and set of formative experiences. Through an analysis of key literature, I locate and synthesise the issues pertinent to how Gen X Catholic women construct and perform their identities. Examining the effect and impact of secular and Catholic discourses will contribute to a greater understanding of the meaning of Catholicism in the lives of Gen X women.

3.2 The sociocultural formation of Gen X Catholics

Beginning in the 1960s, after the completion of Vatican II, alterations in liturgical and sacramental practice compelled new perceptions of the Catholic Church as an institution, fundamentally transforming Catholic culture in Australia (Ormerod 2014). For Gen X

Catholics, being brought up in the post-conciliar period meant their formative and young adult experiences lacked the powerful ideology and images of sectarian Catholic culture that served to bond earlier generations (Rymarz 2007a). In contrast to Baby Boomer Catholics, Gen X did not experience fasting, Friday Benediction, the Latin Mass, or the Catholic solidarity that resulted from denominational difference (Rymarz 2004). Even though the task of formation is the duty of families in Catholicism (CCC, paras. 2223-2226), for Gen X women, the task of catechesis fell primarily to the orders of teaching nuns (Garaty, Hughes & Brock 2015). Richard Rymarz (2007a) contends that Gen X tended to not receive 'the intellectual tools to address, in a serious way, their own religious heritage' (p. 98). Instead, Catholic adherents from Gen X were exposed to an assortment of cultural experiences and opinions during their formative years, which resulted in a poor grasp of official Catholic teachings and less involvement in Catholic social networks compared to earlier generations of Catholics in Australia (Dixon 2004; Rymarz 2007a).

There were attempts to evangelise and enculturate Gen X. In the 1980s, there was a rise in new movements and communities that emphasised evangelism (Ryan 2020). Of particular significance for Gen X was the *Antioch* movement, which was introduced to Australia by the Pirola family in 1981 (Pirola 1998; Pirola & Pirola 1998; Ryan 2020). Based on a peer-to-peer, parish-based, invitational ministry model, the *Antioch* movement grew rapidly, and by the end of 1988, an estimated 31,500 youth had attended an *Antioch* weekend in Australia (Pirola 1998). *Antioch* was unapologetic in its evangelistic orientation and *Antioch* weekends were intended to bring about a "conversion experience" that 'had the capacity to dramatically awaken faith and change lives in the space of forty-eight hours' (Pirola 1998, p. 419). Christopher Ryan (2020) notes as follows:

> Rather than being told what to believe by an authority figure, the weekend's participants listened to their peers speak about what they had found personally meaningful for their own journey of faith. It was this testimony to their own search and discovery of spiritual meaning within a broadly traditional articulation of Catholic faith that "spoke" to the young people listening. (p. 35)

Parent couples led *Antioch* groups with their attendance intended to be both a supervisory presence and witness to sacramental married life (Pirola & Pirola 1998). The contemporary, personalised, and testimonial nature of the *Antioch* movement was expected to make Catholicism simultaneously attractive and plausible to young Catholics (Ryan 2020). The effectiveness of the *Antioch* movement as a tool for evangelism varied. Ryan (2020) attributes the movement's unsustainability to the distancing of local groups from the Catholic parish structure.

In the late 1980s, the Catholic Church began to organise local and worldwide pilgrimages to evangelise and affirm youth and provide them with an all-encompassing experience of Catholic culture (Hervieu-Léger 2000). For example, in Australia, World Youth Day has been celebrated at a diocesan level in the week before Easter each year since 1986, with an international gathering held every two to three years in a different host city (Cleary 2013; Rymarz 2007b). Ryan (2020) reports as follows:

> The first group of Australians to attend a World Youth Day (WYD) were from *Antioch*, who sent a group to the 12th WYD held in Paris, in 1997. Over two thousand Australians attended the international WYD held in Rome in 2000. (p. 38; my emphasis)

World Youth Day 2008, in Sydney, provided some Gen X Catholics with an experience of immersion in traditional Catholic culture and a firsthand encounter with the papacy (Mason 2010). Research has shown the potential of World Youth Days and other evangelical movements, events, and pilgrimages to reinforce and revitalise Catholic faith and denominational identity (Cleary 2013; Halter 2013; Ryan 2020). Nonetheless, the

strength of any long-term influence on Gen X and subsequent generations remains untested (Cleary 2013; Halter 2013; Ryan 2020; Rymarz 2007b).

In the absence of a pervasive Catholic culture, the identities of many Gen X Catholics have been affected by the fundamental changes in secular society that have taken place since the 1960s. Gen X were raised in a society impacted by 'the economic crisis of the 1970s, the AIDS epidemic and threat of global nuclear war' (Possamai 2009, p. 2). Brought up on television and technology, Gen X are more likely to regard celebrities and popular culture as moral mentors, rather than Jesus (Beaudoin 1998; Possamai 2009). Richard Flory and Donald Miller (2008) purport that Gen X identities have being fuelled by the technological revolution, which makes it possible to construct an identity from a diverse and endless supply of consumerism, popular culture, and knowledge. Relentless social, cultural, and economic change during their lifetime has meant society, as Gen X Catholics know it, has been constantly reinventing itself. Without an all-encompassing Catholic formation and with parents who sought not to impose beliefs and ritual practices, many from Gen X have been left with no clear path to follow (Miller & Miller 2000). The pressure to belong is not as important for Gen X as for previous generations and they tend to appropriate a complex mix of elements from diverse religions and popular cultures to form a unique set of beliefs and practices (Possamai 2009). Personal authority and individual experiences have become a central source of meaning and identity formation for Gen X (Beaudoin 1998; Rose, Hughes & Bouma 2014; Wuthnow 2007).

3.3 Gen X feminist consciousness

Gen X women have been affected by the substantial changes in expectations around women's role in Australian society in late modernity. For instance, in Australia, women's material rights and inclusion in the paid workforce (at all levels) are well established

(Roberts 2013). When compared with earlier generations, Gen X have secured considerable gains in their health, education, welfare, and financial independence (Cuervo, Wyn & Crofts 2012; Gibson 2003). Improvements in access to quality childcare, superannuation, and reproductive and sexual health services have provided Gen X women with greater choice and agency in life decision-making (Cuervo, Wyn & Crofts 2012; Gibson 2003). A significant proportion of Gen X Catholic women are in the paid labour force, are highly educated, and employed in leadership and professional roles in both secular and Catholic organisations (Dixon et al. 2017; NCPR 2019). Despite progress in women's workforce participation and education, a debate has emerged over whether "feminism" and/or the task of gender equality is "complete", "unfinished", or just no longer "relevant" in Australia (Cuervo, Wyn & Crofts 2012; Everingham, Stevenson & Warner-Smith 2007).

Paradoxically, the very success of feminist movements, that has opened a diversity of life choices for women since the 1960s, has interacted with gender and class issues to make feminist discourses from previous generations unconvincing for many Gen X women (Everingham, Stevenson & Warner-Smith 2007). Penelope Robinson (2007/8) maintains that having grown up in an era with a very different socio-political context than the preceding generation of feminists, Gen X have experienced a world where the resonance of protest has been replaced with an 'individualist rhetoric of neoliberalism' (p. 49). This means that Gen X women champion a different, more individualistic allegiance to issues related to socio-economic and cultural structures where personal experiences are the key (Everingham, Stevenson & Warner-Smith 2007). While this has been articulated by some as purely a "backlash" against feminism, it can be argued that it is really a more nuanced and complex interaction as it involves feminist ideals being

concurrently ‘articulated and repudiated, expressed and disavowed’ (Gill 2008, p. 442). Rosalind Gill explains in the following way:

> celebrations of “girl power” and female success sat alongside the intense hostile scrutiny of women in the public eye; pronouncements about gender equality were juxtaposed with the growing misogyny of “lad culture”; and assertions about the redundancy of feminism were paired with an intensified interest in sexual difference, and with the repeated assertion that any remaining inequalities were not the result of sexism but of natural differences and/or of women’s own choices. (Gill, in Banet-Weiser, Gill & Rottenberg 2020, pp. 4-5)

Gill has developed the notion of *postfeminist sensibility* to respond to and name this shift towards the repetitive emphasis upon choice and autonomy, alongside the contradictory but simultaneous focus on women’s bodies as their source of value (Banet-Weiser, Gill & Rottenberg 2020).

In Australia, research on patterns of participation in education and in the workforce show that, for Gen X women,

> traditional gender roles have been sustained despite the dramatic shift towards gender equality in educational participation. Even though women now participate more than ever before in the labour market, nonetheless their engagement with work is highly gendered. Traditional ideas about men’s and women’s family roles, including the belief that women are best suited to assume domestic and childbearing responsibilities, and men are best suited to careers, persist. (Cuervo, Wyn & Crofts 2012, p. 5)

Catherine Rottenberg (2014) uses the term *neoliberal feminism* to interrogate the re-traditionalisation of gender roles under the hegemony of neoliberalism. She clarifies as follows:

> By maintaining reproduction as part of middle-class or so-called aspirational women’s normative trajectory and positing balance as its normative frame and ultimate ideal, neoliberal feminism helps to maintain a discourse of reproduction and care work while at the same time ensuring that all responsibility for these forms of labour – but not

> necessarily all of the labour itself – falls squarely on the shoulders of so-called aspirational women. (Rottenberg, in Banet-Weiser, Gill & Rottenberg 2020, p. 8)

Rottenberg argues that neoliberal feminism, with its notion of agency and apparent work-life balance, has assisted in rendering 'feminism palatable and legitimate, which has, in turn, facilitated feminism's widespread diffusion, embrace and circulation' (Rottenberg, in Banet-Weiser, Gill & Rottenberg 2020, p. 8). The commodification of feminism as articulated in hashtag activism, social media, advertising campaigns, and the branding of feminist products has allowed neoliberal feminism to flourish in popular culture and media. Sarah Banet-Weiser (2018) proposes that *popular feminism* materialises where:

> It appears on broadcast media, in television and advertising. It appears in popular music. In the contemporary context, it appears perhaps most urgently in social media, with digital sites such as Instagram, Tumblr, Facebook, and Twitter providing platforms for its circulation. (p. 9)

Through the public visibility of popular feminism, postfeminist sensibility with its individualism and the transformative subjectivity, and neoliberal feminism with an accompanying ideal of happy work-life balance as progressive womanhood, have revitalised feminist discourses (Banet-Weiser, Gill & Rottenberg 2020). This integration of feminism and feminist ideals into the mainstream has driven discussion and activism around feminist issues (Banet-Weiser, Gill & Rottenberg 2020).

The rise of feminist discourses in modern Western societies has centralised women's rights in the neo-liberal state. As a result, Gen X women are engaging with diverse feminist theories, standpoints, and *praxis*. What this means and how it influences individual women's views and experiences varies considerably (Cuervo, Wyn & Crofts 2012). Post-feminist, neoliberalist, and popular feminisms draw on and feed off one another as contrasting discourses. They juxtapose with outmoded, *kyriarchal* notions of

femininity and rigid, binary understandings of gender in Catholicism to challenge, produce, and undermine the agency of Gen X Catholic women.

3.4 The Second Vatican Council (Vatican II)

The situation of Gen X women in the Catholic Church can, as I have claimed above, be traced back to two major processes of social and cultural change that began in the 1960s, namely, Vatican II and the rise of modern feminism in the form of the women's movement. Both triggered a trajectory of hope for substantial social change for the position of women in the Catholic Church and society. Together, they have the potential to be highly significant in the construction of Gen X women's identities.

The papacy of John XXIII and the opening of Vatican II mark the beginning of a transformation in how women experience and encounter Catholicism and perceive their role in the Catholic Church. In 1963, the papal encyclical *Pacem in Terris (Peace on Earth)* stated:

> Women are gaining an increasing awareness of their natural dignity. Far from being content with a purely passive role or allowing themselves to be regarded as a kind of instrument, they are demanding both in domestic and in public life the rights and duties which belong to them as human persons. (PT, para. 41)

In 1964, history was made when twenty-three women were admitted to Vatican II as auditors and participants in theological commissions (Goldie 1998; McEnroy 1996; O'Malley 2010). Combined with advances that were taking place for women in secular society, these events raised hopes that the council 'might afford women greater roles in decision-making and ministry in a church that thus far had limited women's participation' (Hinsdale 2016, p. 252).

The documents that were published by Vatican II, however, say little about the status of women as a discrete group within the Catholic Church (Faggioli 2012; Luckman

2006). The role of women in Church and society was not one of the explicit themes of the council and there was no clear agenda to address issues regarding women. Massimo Faggioli (2012) observes that 'the council fathers did not express interest in a gender-neutral theological language, and Vatican II as an event had as its main characters only male members of the clergy' (Loc. 896). Rosemary Goldie (1998), in describing her appointment as an auditor at Vatican II, notes: 'all the auditors, both men and women, were well aware of the symbolic nature of their participation' (p. 71). Catherine E. Clifford (2014) maintains as follows:

> there is no point in the council's teachings at which women are the object of sustained reflection or are treated as a distinct group of persons within the community of all the baptized, some are tempted to conclude that the council may have forgotten women, or that women had no part to play in either the event of the council or in the elaboration of its teaching … Yet this would be inaccurate. (p. 61)

Harriet Luckman (2006) argues as follows regarding council documents:

> signposts that seemed to point toward women's fuller participation in the church … rested more in the council's expanded teaching on a number of traditional theological themes rather than explicitly on women's inclusion in active leadership roles within the church. (pp. 79-80)

Many statements in the council's documents have implications for women and have been used to provide support for a re-thinking of the role of women in ministry and leadership within the Catholic Church.

The restoration of the biblical notion of "the people of God" as an ecclesial vision for ministry in *Lumen Gentium (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church)* places renewed emphasis on baptism and confirmation as commissioning sacraments (Clifford 2014; Luckman 2006; Sheehan 2000), indicating a 'major shift in the understanding of church, even in its very construction' (Hines 1993, p. 162). Prior to Vatican II, Mary Ellen Sheehan (2000) maintains that, in Catholicism, the exercise of ministry was:

> primarily the domain of the ordained. Ministry exercised by the laity, including women was called the apostolate and was understood as derived from and delegated by the clergy under the leadership of the bishop. (p. 52)

This meant that the laity, and therefore women, were perceived to play no active role in the life or mystery of the Church (Sheehan 2000; Vorgrimler 1985). The teaching of Vatican II expressed in its documents revised the position of lay men and women in the Catholic Church. Regarding *Lumen Gentium*, Ormond Rush (2003) notes:

> The history of the constitution's drafting traces a shift in Catholic teaching from depicting the laity in a derivative and passive relationship with the hierarchy in the mission of the church, to a more active description of that relationship in which the laity also participates. (p. 139)

Lumen Gentium does ratify the contribution of the laity to the Church and recommends that the magisterium should engage in dialogue with lay men and women (Sheehan 2000). It confirms that while ordained clergy represent Christ in a unique manner, the laity share 'by virtue of their baptism, in the priestly, prophetic, and kingly office of Christ' (Luckman 2006, p. 84). *Sacrosanctum Concilium (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy)* asserts that in and through the sacraments, the Church, as the people of God, is the presence of Jesus Christ (Gaillardetz & Clifford 2012; SC, para. 7). *Gaudium et Spes (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World)* denounces discrimination and declares as follows:

> [while all] are not alike from the point of view of varying physical power and the diversity of intellectual and moral resources. Nevertheless, with respect to the fundamental rights of the person, every type of discrimination, whether social or cultural, whether based on sex, race, color, social condition, language or religion, is to be overcome and eradicated as contrary to God's intent. For in truth it must still be regretted that fundamental personal rights are still not being universally honored. Such is the case of a woman who is denied the right to choose a husband freely, to embrace a state of life or to acquire an education or cultural benefits equal to those recognized for men. (GS, para. 29)

Further justice statements in *Gaudium et Spes* advocate for women's rights in the workplace and society and call for the collaboration of women in the Catholic Church (Clifford 2014; GS paras. 9, 29, 52, 59f; Sheehan 2000).

In the context of the 1960s, and the beginnings of modern feminist and civil rights movements, the affirmation of the dignity of women in the documents propagated by Vatican II seems to indicate that the Catholic Church was acknowledging society's growing awareness of the issues of racial and sexual inequality (Luckman 2006; Sheehan 2000). The council, however, was male and clerically centred and its documents preserve the orientation of the status and mission of women in the Catholic Church, primarily in relation to men. *Lumen Gentium* and *Gaudium et Spes* both underline the notion that women are a "class" separate from men, united by their common nature and vocation (GS, paras. 52, 60; LG, paras. 56-65; Luckman 2006). In the accounts of the women who attended the council as auditors, there are stories of a different, "romantic" language being used 'to speak of women – comparing her to flowers, sunlight, etc.' (McEnroy 1996, p. 139). An auditor at the council, Pilar Bellosillo remarks:

> That imagery has nothing to do with the reality that women live. This kind of language detached from life puts women on a pedestal instead of on the same level as man. By doing so, you demonstrate that in reality you consider a man the human being, not woman. (Bellosillo, cited in McEnroy 1996, p. 139)

In the years since Vatican II, interpretations of exactly what the renewed understanding of Church in council documents meant for the laity, and particularly women, have resulted in significant debate. Michele Dillon (1999) argues:

> Vatican II publicly validated the principle that doctrinal and institutional change was a necessary process attendant on the church's own historical consciousness. As a boundary-shifting event in its own right, and as an event that demonstrated the permeability of apparently fixed boundaries … it displaced the supremacy of the church

> hierarchy as the "producer" of Catholicism and offered a more egalitarian and culturally dynamic understanding of the production of religious meanings. (p. 25)

John O'Malley (2003) contends:

> Vatican II intended to make some fundamental changes in the way the church operates and that those changes, should they be put into practice, would do much to address our current situation and give us confidence for the future. Perhaps the main reason they have not been put into practice is that the radical nature of the council has never been accepted or understood. Vatican II, for all its continuity with previous councils, was unique in many ways but nowhere more than in its call for an across-the-board change in church procedures or, better, in church style. (p. 12)

Some in the Catholic Church interpret the teachings that come from the council documents as a directive to make the laity a constitutive part of the Church and its governance (Baum 2011). Others, primarily from the magisterium, argue that Vatican II and the teaching in its documents represent continuity with the principles of past councils and are intended to recover the proper authority of the clergy (Benedict XVI 2005). Avery Dulles (2003) claims that, at no point, did Vatican II or its documents suggest that members of the magisterium:

> have any obligation to accept the recommendations of the laity with regard to matters pertaining to the pastoral office. While encouraging cooperation with priests, deacons and laypersons, the council placed the powers of authoritative teaching, sacramental worship and pastoral government squarely and exclusively in the hands of the hierarchy. (p. 10)

With no clear impetus for radical change, the definitive view of the magisterium is that hierarchical-clerical power structures in Catholicism must be retained. Therefore, even though Vatican II should have instigated significant change for women in Catholicism, alterations to the role of the laity that came from Vatican II have not been extended fully to women. Changes in Catholic doctrine that might have opened opportunities for women to be included in ministerial and theological leadership have not

been instated in Church law or the Catholic Catechism (Ross 2013). Patricia Madigan (2018) contends:

> Instead of developing a theology and anthropology which would promote a full vocational "flourishing" for each and every Christian, the focus has been on defining a positive and idealised role for women in the church and world which at the same time will protect the Church's hierarchal and patriarchal power structures from the challenges posed by giving equal status to women. (p. 88)

Progress around the full inclusion of women in the people of God has stalled as equality for women is still qualified by the understanding that women are a group separate and complementary to men, united by a common nature and set of characteristics (Luckman 2006).

3.5 Gender complementarity

In the more than fifty years since Vatican II, the magisterium has continually used its teaching on gender and sexuality, often referred to as gender complementarity, to place emphasis on the complementary role and nature of women and men in society and Church (Beattie 2018; Case 2016; Ross 2013). Gender complementarity is a theological anthropology that describes men and women as embodying contrasting human natures that correspond to distinct, biblically prescribed social roles and responsibilities. It is grounded in the claim that, at creation, God created a complementary anthropology or division in human nature that corresponds with physical sexuality (Johnson 2002a). The doctrine of gender complementarity, which became prominent in papal teaching during the twentieth century (Case 2016), 'does not simply insist on the meaning of gender, but decrees that there are only two distinct genders that are essentially different' (Schüssler Fiorenza 2016, p. 81). It presupposes that maleness and femaleness are sex/gender positions that exist only in binary opposition. Herein, gender complementarity confirms

the equal dignity of men and women, yet asserts an essential, ontological difference, which means that humanity is only complete when men and women collaborate equally, using their complementary attributes (Beattie 2018; Johnson 2002a; Ross 2013). This dualistic model of humanity uses stereotypes to construe characteristics and roles as either innately feminine or masculine. It orientates masculinity with rationality, order, and decision-making and femininity or womanliness with receptivity, maternity, and nurturing roles (Johnson 2002a). As Ivy Helman (2012) upholds, women are 'sexed and gendered down to their souls. Femininity is not just something women do; it is something women are' (p. 103). Official Catholic theologies use gender complementarity to exclude women from equal participation in the Catholic Church, a right that many Gen X Catholic women have achieved in secular organisations.

The notion of gender complementarity is used in magisterial doctrine to limit women's participation in the public realm and exclude women from ritual leadership and Church governance (Beattie 2018; CCL, canons. 120, 1379). Kelsy Burke (2012) contends that patriarchal, gender-traditional religions such as Catholicism, which endorse the belief that men and women were created to fulfil distinctive and complementary roles, tend to privilege men over women. Elizabeth Vasko (2014) agrees, arguing as follows:

> anthropologies that identify masculinity with leadership, reason, and aggressiveness and femininity with receptivity, emotion, and nurturance are particularly troubling, as they lift up models of dominance-submission as biologically normative for gender relations. (p. 507)

In the official Catholic Church's declaration against ordained ministry for women, the magisterium uses gender complementarity and the Christological mystery to claim that a priest must physically resemble Jesus Christ and therefore must be biologically male (Beattie 2018; II, para. 5). This declaration isolates gender as an aspect of particularity, equating maleness with normative human nature, thus rendering women as

imperfect humans (Radford Ruether 1981; Schüssler Fiorenza 2016). Gender complementarity, used in this way, threatens the redemption of women as it was specifically a "human nature" that Jesus assumed in the incarnation, and if "human nature" is split into two, the paradigm of salvation collapses (Maitand 2015). Sara Maitand (2015) highlights that '"equal but different" and "separate development" is the rhetoric of apartheid, of segregation, and of violence' (p. 68) and contends that is unimaginable that God would have endorsed 'a way of being, that is consistently incompatible of delivering justice to more than half the human beings in the world' (p. 69). Susan Ross (2013) claims that the emphasis on subordinate and maternal roles for women that is dominant in magisterial teaching can be genuinely harmful for women who live in contexts where their human dignity is not fully honoured. An individual's particular role or personality trait cannot be attributed to gender but is instead part of the constellation of characteristics that form humanity. Gender complementarity overlooks the reality that individuals are not only sexed but can be also defined by an intersection of gender, race, class, sexuality, nationhood, and ability (Schüssler Fiorenza 2016).

3.6 Human sexuality

The magisterium's normative model of femininity and its teachings on sexuality limit, regulate, and control the sexual activity of women. The catechism of the Catholic Church teaches that 'sexual pleasure is morally disordered when sought for itself, isolated from its procreative and unitive purposes' (CCC, para. 2351). The use of artificial birth control is prohibited, and sexual activity only permitted as a heterosexual marital act that retains an 'intrinsic relationship to the procreation of human life' (HV, para. 11). Any fertility treatments that dissociate husband and wife, including surrogacy, sperm or ovum donation, and artificial insemination and fertilisation, are described as 'gravely immoral'

(CCC, para. 2376-2377). The regulation of sexual activity limits women's agency in life decision-making and ignores the reality of mutual sexual unions. It is taught that rejection of magisterial teaching on procreation is a rejection of divine law even when 'the intention is to protect or promote the welfare of an individual, of a family or of society in general' (HV, para. 14). This absolute prohibition trivialises the threat to women from the real psychological and physical harm caused by multiple births, sexually transmitted disease, and dangerous pregnancies. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (2016) argues:

> Studies show that responsible contraceptive use has enabled families to move out of poverty, whereas the lack of effective contraception leads to an increase in abortions, starvation, and impoverishment. (p. 81)

The demand that Catholic women be "open to life" does not just limit their authority over their own bodies, it places them at risk of physiological and/or psychological harm.

3.7 Women in the post conciliar Catholic Church

Even though Vatican II did not directly address the marginalisation of women in the Catholic Church or ever invoke the word feminism, the event and its documents did trigger a hermeneutic of change that has had a profound effect on the mentality and *praxis* of Catholic women (Clifford 2014; Faggioli 2012; Hindsdale 2015). Indeed, Carmel McEnroy (1996), in her research project on the women auditors of the council, observes:

> In keeping with the conciliar spirit, the women of Vatican II were convinced that they had turned the corner in terms of being accepted as equal and full church members. There was no going back. (pp. 265-7)

Massimo Faggioli (2012) claims that despite being a 'real step beyond the "letter" of Vatican II' (Loc. 896), the development of Catholic feminist theologies was the consequence of a hermeneutical shift that occurred at the council. Mary Ann Hinsdale

(2016) proposes that a paradigm shift took place during Vatican II that would affect 'the situation of women in the Catholic Church and even theology itself' (p. 255). I argue that a major development in the trajectory of Vatican II and its documents was the development of Catholic feminist theologies and movements.

Vatican II had a lasting impact on the outlook and *praxis* of women in the Catholic Church. Since the council, women have taken part in pastoral and lay ecclesial ministries and have studied and taught theologies, making significant contributions to scriptural and theological scholarship (Clifford 2014; Hinsdale 2015, 2016). Increasingly, women have sought to use the council documents to claim a right to serve in positions of ministerial authority and leadership within the Catholic Church (Faggioli 2012; Goldie 1998; Ross 2013). Despite this, those hopeful for changes to official Catholic teachings that perpetuate *kyriarchal* theologies and discriminate against women have increasingly become discouraged and dispirited. For instance, while some gendered roles in the Catholic Church have reformed, the magisterium has remained unwavering in its staunch commitment to an all-male, celibate priesthood (Beattie 2018; Ecklund 2003). Catholic women remain unable to apply for ordination into the diaconate or priesthood and, in practice, their participation in ministry and leadership is restricted in many Australian dioceses and parishes (Macdonald et al. 1999; McEwan & McPhillips 2017). Readings of biblical texts and historical sources continue to prioritise a male perspective in a way that makes masculinity normative and relegates women and femininity to a secondary order (Hinsdale 2016; Radford Ruether 1983; Schüssler Fiorenza 2009). The ecclesiology and principles of biblical interpretation expressed in *Lumen Gentium* and *Dei Verbum (Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation)* acted to encourage many women to undertake theological study and enter ecclesial professions (DV, para. 8; LG, para. 12). Yet, despite a plethora of Catholic women in Australia now being qualified, published

academic theologians (Hill & Barker 2020), the magisterium continues to ratify anthropologies that diminish the contribution of women (Ross 2013). Schüssler Fiorenza (2016) contends:

> Feminist the*logians in Catholic institutions are increasingly controlled by the hierarchy, and if they are nuns, wo/men are subject to repression and silencing by the Vatican. (p. 91)

Natalia Imperatori-Lee (2015) argues feminist and other theologies that prioritise a diversity of women's experience have introduced new ecclesial insights and theological perspectives. Nonetheless, the magisterium continues to endorse the limited anthropologies of womanhood and reduce women to receptors of the teachings of an all-male *kyriarchy* who claim theological authority (Coblentz 2017). A 'conflation of theology with catechesis or the reduction of theology to the repetition of the catechism or of magisterial statements' (Imperatori-Lee 2015, p. 97) mean female theologian's voices are often silenced or sidelined.[3] Tina Beattie (2018) asserts:

> Many women are leaving the church not because they have lost their faith, but because of the conflict between the institutional church and modern society around issues of gender and women's rights, including sexual and reproductive rights. This is exacerbated by the sense of betrayal that many feel over the sex abuse crisis. (p. 1)

Ignoring the progress of women in secular society, the magisterium has continued to formally support gender inequality and restrict the liturgical participation of women (McPhillips & McEwan 2020). The secular worldview that grants Gen X women autonomy and self-expression acts as a contrast to the restrictions and limitations levied against women by Church law and official dogmas.

[3] In 2011, the US Catholic Conference of Bishops Committee on Doctrine publicly condemned the work of Elizabeth Johnson, a Catholic nun and a Professor of Theology at Fordham University. The committee critiqued Johnson's work *Quest for the living God* (2007) as not being theologically accurate, publicly addressing her using her ecclesiastical title (of Sister) rather than her academic title (Imperatori-Lee 2015).

3.8 Growing polarisation

In the post-Vatican II era, theological debate around conciliar hermeneutics has divided the Catholic Church (Faggioli 2015). While some Catholics have adopted a hermeneutic of reform, others have resisted the theological and liturgical changes brought about by the council and adopted a more orthodox set of Catholic traditions and teachings (Faggioli 2017). Under the umbrella of the Catholic Church, there are organisations and new ecclesial movements that foster a connection with the magisterium and advocate conservative ideologies such as New Feminism and "feminine genius" theology (Beattie 2006). These sit alongside more liberal Catholic groups who foreground social justice issues and a more pastoral approach to ministry (Beaudoin & Hornbeck 2013). In Australia, Gen X women are immersed in a pluralistic Church filled with a growing polarisation that has intensified as the Catholic Church in Australia holds its Fifth Plenary Council and deals with fallout from the clerical sexual abuse crisis, the recent same-sex marriage debate, and recent decisions by the bishops regarding advocacy for women. These issues will now be discussed in more detail.

3.9 Crisis of child sexual abuse (CSA)

In Australia and abroad, the Catholic Church faces a crisis of de-legitimation because of the scandal associated with disclosure of the numerous cases of sexual abuse, mostly involving children, which were committed by Catholic clergy and members of Catholic religious institutes and subsequently covered-up by Catholic clerics, lay leaders, and the magisterium. Findings from several inquiries into CSA in Australian institutions and organisations (NSW Government 2012–14; Parliament of Victoria 2012–13), including the *Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse* (RCIRCSA) (2012–17), identified the Catholic Church as having significant organisational and

cultural problems that led to thousands of children being sexually abused between 1950 and 2010 (RCIRCSA 2017a, 2017b).

The RCIRCSA received more reports of CSA from survivors that were abused in Catholic institutions and organisations than from any other setting (RCIRCSA 2017a). The largest proportion (74.7 per cent) of survivors in the RCIRCSA private sessions recalled experiences of CSA in Catholic organisations perpetrated by people in ministry, including priests, brothers, and nuns (RCIRCSA 2017b, p. 82). Many survivors (17 per cent) were abused by multiple perpetrators (RCIRCSA 2017b, p. 83). Indeed, the RCIRCSA estimates that 7.9 per cent of priests who ministered during the period 1950 to 2010 were alleged perpetrators (RCIRCSA 2017b, p. 85). Furthermore, the RCIRCSA found that senior authority figures of the Catholic Church, both in Australia and overseas, were aware of the crisis of clergy-perpetrated child sexual abuse (CPCSA) and failed to respond, leaving children at risk (RCIRCSA 2017b). Evidence received by the RCIRCSA showed that there were in some cases systematic failures and cover-ups (RCIRCSA 2017b). Francis Sullivan, then the Chief Executive Officer of the *Truth, Justice and Healing Council*,[4] claimed that the evidence of CPCSA uncovered by the RCIRCSA:

> can only be interpreted for what it is: a massive failure on the part of the Catholic Church in Australia to protect children from abusers and perpetrators; a misguided determination by leaders at the time to put the interests of the Church ahead of the most vulnerable; and a corruption of the gospel the Church seeks to profess. (cited in RCIRCSA 2017b, p. 280)

The release of the RCIRCSA finding that Australia's most senior Catholic cleric, George Pell, gave evidence that lacked credibility has heightened concerns regarding the credibility of Catholic authorities (Marr 2020a, 2020b). More recently, further high-

[4] The *Truth, Justice and Healing Council* was established by the ACBC and CRA after the announcement of the RCIRCSA to coordinate engagement between the organisations and the RCIRCSA (RCIRCSA 2017b).

profile convictions of paedophile priests and revelations about the treatment of women, especially nuns, continue to draw attention to the continued failures of the Catholic Church concerning the safeguarding of women, children, and other vulnerable groups (Ferguson 2020; McPhillips 2019; McPhillips & McEwan 2020).

The RCIRCSA and associated media attention increased awareness of CPCSA, leading to an internal crisis in the confidence of the Catholic Church across Australia. Research carried out within the 2016 NCLS indicated that more than half (57 per cent) of Mass attendees agreed or strongly agreed that 'the cases of sexual abuse by priests and religious have damaged … confidence in Church authorities' (Dixon & Reid 2018, p. 7). More than two thirds (64 per cent) of Mass attendees agreed or strongly agreed that the response of church authorities to incidences of CSA was inadequate and showed 'a complete failure of responsibility' (Dixon & Reid 2018, p. 13). Only about one in ten (9 per cent) Mass attendees strongly agreed that 'Church authorities can be trusted when they speak about child sexual abuse' (Dixon & Reid 2018, p. 22). Studies reveal the collective, vicarious trauma among Catholics in Australia (McPhillips 2017a, 2017c, 2018, 2020). To date, there is no substantiated research that surveys the thoughts of individual Catholics who do not attend Mass (Dixon & Reid 2018) or provides details of the direct impact of the CPCSA crisis on Mass attendance rates (McPhillips 2017b).

3.10 Same-sex marriage

The Catholic Church's legitimacy and moral authority in Australia, irretrievably damaged by the scandal of CPCSA, has been further undermined by a divergence in opinion around same-sex marriage. In 2017, when the Australian Government commissioned a national postal vote on same-sex marriage legislation, religious groups, including the official Catholic Church, actively campaigned to limit marriage to heterosexual couples for the

whole of society (Perales, Bouma & Campbell 2019). The Australian bishops urged Catholic adherents to vote against same-sex marriage on the basis of both moral reasoning and magisterial teachings (Fisher 2016). Despite this, polling in the lead-up to the vote indicated that a majority of Catholic Australians supported the legislation (Koziol 2017). Of the eligible Australians who expressed their view in the postal survey, a majority (61.6 per cent) indicated that 'the law should be to allow same-sex couples to marry' (ABS 2017a). The official Catholic Church remains steadfast in its opposition to same-sex marriage in Australia (ACBC 2017).

3.11 Closure of the OPW and CACW

The 2019 decision of the ACBC to disband its National *Office for the Participation of Women* (OPW) and *Council for Australian Catholic Women* (CACW) has generated anger among those who are seeking reform and an end to clericalism in the Catholic Church (McPhillips & McEwan 2020). In 2000, the ACBC published in their Social Justice Statement, *Woman and man: The bishops respond* (2000),[5] nine decisions and thirty-one recommendations for action to further the participation of women in Australian Catholic parishes and dioceses. One of the key decisions was the establishment of *The Commission for Australian Catholic Women*. The function of the commission was to oversee the implementation of the ACBC recommendations. In 2005–6, the commission was restructured with a changed mandate into the CACW and incorporated into the newly formed OPW (Wagner 2010). Instead of reporting directly to the ACBC as the commission once had, the new CACW was set up to advise the *Bishops Commission for Church Ministry* (Wagner 2010). This raised concern as few of the ACBC decisions and recommendations outlined so clearly in the *Woman and man: The bishops respond* (2000)

[5] The statement followed research on the participation and experiences of women in the Catholic Church commissioned by the ACBC and published in *Woman and man: One in Christ Jesus* (1999).

statement had been implemented. In its renewed agenda, the CACW was mandated with only part of the responsibility of the original Commission (Wagner 2010).

In late 2019, while the ACBC was meeting and announcing the closure of the CACW and OPW, the publication, *Still listening to the Spirit: Woman and man twenty years on* (2019), was launched (ACBC 2019a; McPhillips & McEwan 2020). The decision appeared to sit in stark contrast to the radical reforms promised by the ACBC Social Justice Sunday Statement released in 2000. In the foreword of this publication, two Australian bishops, Christopher Prowse and Vincent Long Van Nguyen, both leading members of the ACBC, state:

> A further twenty years down the track, women are still listening to the Spirit and seeking to engage the whole Church in a conversation about a more fulsome development of the participation of women in the Church, for the sake of us all, and for the sake of the Reign of God. There is unfinished business from the action commitments made by the bishops in 2000. (Prowse & Long Van Nguyen 2019, p. xx)

There is still unfinished business for women seeking reform in the Catholic Church in Australia. With the closure of the OPW and CACW, and a lack of political will, the vision of full participation for women within the life and mission of the Catholic Church remains a long way from realisation.

3.12 The Fifth Plenary Council of the Catholic Church in Australia

In 2018, the Catholic Church in Australia embarked on the process of its fifth Plenary Council. The first phase of *Listening and Dialogue* began with consultations with the Catholic community in Australia. More than 222,000 people participated contributing to 17,457 submissions revealing their hopes, questions, yearnings for the Catholic Church in Australia (ACBC 2019b). From these submissions, six national themes emerged including key initiatives around fostering the vocation and participation of Catholic

women (ACBC 2019a, 2019b). At this time, the Australian Bishops committed to address:

> the inclusion of women in Church leadership roles, with particular focus on nurturing a spirituality and theological pathway for growth and leadership in young women; and leading the Church in ways that draw on the gifts and talents of all of the People of God, recognising that, by their Baptism, women and men of all ages and all vocations are co-responsible for the Church's mission. (ACBC 2019a, p. 4)

The second phase of *Listening and Discernment* brought together adherents from all over Australia in writing and discernment sessions, to discern on the initial submissions and draft thematic papers towards making an agenda for the first assembly (ACBC 2019b). Of the six discernment papers written by these small writing groups, all but one contains key statements regarding the importance of including women in governance, leadership, and decision-making roles, as well as pastoral and liturgical ministry (ACBC 2019b).

The positive position of the discernment papers and statements of the ACBC regarding women's participation were not reflected in the Plenary Council working document *Continuing the Journey* (2021b), or its *Agenda* (ACBC 2021b). In fact, only two paragraphs in *Continuing the Journey* (2021b) explicitly address the involvement of women. The working document states, 'the *perceived* underrepresentation of women in formal leadership and decision-making roles is a challenging issue for many in Australia' (ACBC 2021a, para. 55; my emphasis). There is no specific mention of women in the Plenary Council *Agenda* (ACBC 2021b).

Furthermore, the process of determining participation in the first Plenary Council assembly, which was held in October 2021, was not transparent. The two hundred and eighty members (formerly called delegates) for the Plenary Council were nominated by dioceses, ordinariates, leaders of religious congregations, eparchies, some church

ministries, and a personal prelature (ACBC 2019b). The members were to represent adherents from local churches at the Council over two assemblies (ACBC 2019b). However, whether the members are actually meant to be constituents or are simply representative of Catholic adherents in Australia is unclear (Warhurst 2021). While women, LGBTIQA+ folk, and other groups marginalised within Catholicism were not excluded from Council assemblies, there was no mandate or quota for them to attend as members (ACBC 2019a, 2019b).

Attempts to consult a diversity of women prior to the Plenary Council were hampered by a silencing of dissenting voices. For instance, on 27 March 2021, the *Australian Catholic Bishops National Centre for Evangelisation* held a "Consultation for Women". The online Zoom gathering was advertised as an opportunity for Catholic women, in the lead-up to the Council, to 'articulate and celebrate their contribution and vision for the mission of the Catholic Church in Australia' (NCE 2021, n.p.). During the Zoom meeting, when women began to speak outside the parameters that the organisers set for discussion, their voices were muted by the female facilitator (Freyne 2021). Comments placed in the Zoom chat by some participants were dismissive of the experience and beliefs of other women. In an article about the event, Gail Freyne (2021) asserts:

> If the bishops had actually listened to what women had told them in the 17,547 submissions to the Plenary Council, they would have known what women wanted to discuss: inclusiveness, ordination to the permanent diaconate or to the priesthood, the blessing of their own gay unions or those of their gay children, the welcoming of the divorced and re-married back to the sacraments, the training of male and female priests and the selection of male and female bishops. Just for starters. But when women began to talk during this Zoom meeting about inclusiveness, for example about the need to appoint a woman as co-chair to the Plenary Council they were muted! … We don't like to talk about power and control in our church, but this 'consultation' was the embodiment of control. (n.p.)

Many Australian Catholics are seeking reform[6] and concerns have been raised as to whether the Plenary Council agenda presents any real prospect of change (Johnstone 2020).

In the lead-up to the first assembly in October 2021, different factional narratives emerged about exactly what issues should be addressed in the Plenary Council assemblies. For instance, Anthony Fisher (2021b), Archbishop of Sydney, pronounced in his homily for the opening Mass that secularisation was the main problem:

> We are all too aware of the unhelpful trends in our culture: the hostility or indifference to faith, told in the rapid rise in the 'nones' with no religion, and moves to exclude those who have faith from the public square; the crisis of affiliation, practice and vocation, most apparent in the shortage of young adults at Mass and elsewhere in our Church's life; the turn against Christian reverence for life and love, in law and practice around abortion, euthanasia, marriage and more. (n.p.)

In contrast, Plenary Council member and reform activist John Warhurst (2021) places the need for renewal in the clerical and hierarchical Church:

> The idea of synodality and co-responsibility means that all members should be accorded an equal voice as we walk together. But modern synodality is grafted onto the old clerical and hierarchical church. Undue deference to those in authority remains embedded and has been evident during the Plenary Council preparations so far … Good outcomes mean an inclusive, transparent and accountable church and a humble church … Ultimately this must mean cultural change within the church at individual and collective levels … Inclusivity must mean an equal role in church decision-making for lay people, especially women. Transparency must mean that church affairs, including financial matters, are not restricted to privileged insiders. Accountability will naturally follow because leaders will be held to account in a way that is impossible now. All of this will mean the creation of new institutions, like diocesan pastoral councils, and the revitalisation of some existing ones. (n.p.)

[6] For example, Australasian Catholic Coalition for Church Reform (ACCCR); Australian Reforming Catholics (ARC); Catholics for Renewal (C4R); Catholics Speak Out (CSO); Concerned Catholics Canberra Goulburn (CCCG); Concerned Catholics Tasmania (CCT); Concerned Catholics Wagga Wagga (CCWW); Concerned Catholics Wollongong (CCW); Women's Wisdom in the Church (WWITCH).

The assembly was shifted online because of the COVID-19 pandemic and the schedule included a number of private member-only sessions and a series of livestreamed public sessions and Masses (ACBC 2019b). Plenary Council members were obliged to sign a non-disclosure agreement in the form of a Code of Conduct (Warhurst 2021). At the close of the first assembly, limited member reports from inside revealed an appetite for reform related to lay governance and the inclusion of women (Sullivan 2021; Warhurst 2021). Yet, from the assembly came no proposals for real change. Instead, the Plenary Council (ACBC 2019b) website flags the commencement of 'the nine-month period of celebration' (n.p.) leading up to the second assembly.

3.13 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have described the contextual backdrop against which Gen X women in Australia have constructed their Catholic identities. In an analysis of key literature, I have located and synthesised the significant secular and Catholic discourses that have affected the formation of Gen X women. I argue that in secular society, Gen X women have gained access to material rights and services in reproductive and sexual health, which have increased their choice and agency in life decision-making. In contrast, I propose that as subjects of official Catholicism, Gen X Catholic women are negatively impacted by Church law and *kyriarchal* teachings that diminish women's value. Furthermore, I argue that the magisterium's steadfast opposition to hermeneutic reform since Vatican II, its lack of acknowledgement of LGBTIQA+ and other gendered rights, and the scandal of the CSA undermine Catholicism's legitimacy and moral authority. The result is a growing incongruence between the convictions of official Catholicism and the secular lives of Gen X Catholic women in Australia.

Chapter Four: Magisterial ecclesiology: Virgin, bride, mother

4.1 Introduction

Building on the previous chapter's analysis of Vatican II as a possible vehicle for reform, this chapter will examine the use of feminine imagery in post-conciliar magisterial ecclesiology. Central to official ecclesial discourse in the post-Vatican II era is the understanding that the Catholic Church is the active presence of the triune God in union with humanity in a community of faith and justice. Since Vatican II, however, magisterial ecclesiology has increasingly employed Mary, the mother of Jesus, as ultimate personification of the Church, utilising idealised feminine imagery to deliver insights and reflections on the vocation and dignity of women. In this chapter, I will argue that magisterial ecclesiology and the use of Mariology in Catholicism since Vatican II have constructed a hegemonic ecclesial imaginary that has the potential to limit agency and opportunity for Catholic women. Feminist theologies note the ability of *kyriarchal* imagery and symbolism in Catholic discourse to shape women's identities and act as structures of power, marginalisation, and exclusion (Schüssler Fiorenza 2016). Accordingly, I use the analytic categories of intersectionality and *kyriarchy* as theoretical spaces to critically analyse and contest fixed, essentialist identity positions and conceptions in Catholicism.

4.2 The Marian mystery of the Church

The principal document of Vatican II on the Church, *Lumen Gentium (the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church)*, affirms the ecclesial understanding of Church as a people of God, a spirit-filled community, acting and united with the triune God as an instrument of

salvation for all humanity. *Lumen Gentium* begins with a description of the purpose of the Church stating:

> Since the Church is in Christ like a sacrament or as a sign and instrument both of a very closely knit union with God and of the unity of the whole human race, it desires now to unfold more fully to the faithful of the Church and to the whole world its own inner nature and universal mission. (LG, para. 1)

This initial statement confirms the Catholic Church as a mystery or sacrament, an arcane reality wherein the presence of the triune God is hidden yet active (McBrien 2009; Paul VI 1963). Then, reinstating the biblical notion of "the people of God" as a vision for ecclesial ministry, *Lumen Gentium* declares that all the baptised, not just clergy 'by regeneration and the anointing of the Holy Spirit, are consecrated as a spiritual house and a holy priesthood' (LG, para. 10). Furthermore, it recognises and professes that, in and through Jesus Christ, 'the entire body of the faithful, anointed as they are by the Holy One, cannot err in matters of belief' (LG, para. 12), thus upholding that laity and clergy, united by baptism, share in the priestly and prophetic functions of Christ (Luckman 2006).

As discussed in Chapter Three, the ecclesiology described in *Lumen Gentium* should have brought about a transformation in the status and vocation of women in Catholicism. Magisterial interpretations of the final chapter (chapter eight) of *Lumen Gentium*, however, have halted progress towards women's full equality. The last chapter of *Lumen Gentium* contains an exposition of the role of Mary, the mother of Jesus, in the mystery of the Church and states:

> By reason of the gift and role of divine maternity, by which she is united with her Son, the Redeemer, and with His singular graces and functions, the Blessed Virgin is also intimately united with the Church … For in the mystery of the Church, which is itself rightly called mother and virgin, the Blessed Virgin stands out in eminent and singular fashion as exemplar both of virgin and mother … The Church indeed, contemplating her hidden sanctity, imitating her charity and faithfully fulfilling the Father's will, by

> receiving the word of God in faith becomes herself a mother. By her preaching she brings forth to a new and immortal life the sons who are born to her in baptism, conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of God. She herself is a virgin, who keeps the faith given to her by her Spouse whole and entire. Imitating the mother of her Lord, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, she keeps with virginal purity an entire faith, a firm hope and a sincere charity. (LG, paras. 63-4)

There has been some debate over the placement of Mariology in a document on the nature of Church. Cristina Lledo Gomez (2015) contends:

> The incorporation of Marian cultic belief and practice into the Constitution on the Church with the Church's motherhood represented in Mary … can be seen as supporting the primary pastoral intent of Vatican II. Given the strongly Marian character of Catholic faith at the time, the utilization of Mary as ecclesia-type assisted in understanding the Church's nature. (p. 40)

Richard Lennan (2010) argues that the inclusion of Mariology in *Lumen Gentium* emphasises Mary's 'place within the communion of believers … as the model of discipleship' (p. 241) while, at the same time, discouraging excessive Marian veneration. In contrast, Joseph Ratzinger (1988) (later Benedict XVI) claims that the text on Mary in *Lumen Gentium,* which underscores her veneration as Church, was written as a deliberate parallel to the earlier chapters on the structure of the Church. He asserts:

> As against the masculine, activist, and sociological approach of the "people of God" there is the fact that Church – *Ecclesia* – is feminine. This brings out a dimension of the mystery that points beyond the sociological aspect; only here can we see the real basis and unifying power that ground the Church. Church is more than "people," more than structure and actions: in her lives the mystery of motherhood and of that spousal love which makes motherhood possible. (Ratzinger 1988, pp. 71-2)

By unifying Mariology with ecclesiology, Ratzinger (1988) purports, the authors of *Lumen Gentium* act against understanding Church through a masculine, structuralist ecclesiology that denatures Church to a 'mere program of action' (p. 73). He argues that a feminine ecclesiology, with Mary at its core, elevates the status of the feminine,

revealing the Church not as a structure but incarnation of God's plan for humanity (Ratzinger 1988). Herein, Ratzinger claims, the unification of Mariology with ecclesiology in the text of *Lumen Gentium* is central to the mystery of the Church. He states:

> The Church is the body, the flesh of Christ, in the spiritual tension of love in which the conjugal mystery of Adam and Eve is fulfilled, in the dynamism of a unity which does not eliminate reciprocity. This means that the very Eucharistic-Christological mystery of the Church which is proclaimed in the term "Body of Christ" can only keep its proper proportions if it includes the Marian mystery, namely, that of the Virgin who hears the word and – having been liberated by grace – utters her "Fiat" and thus becomes the Bride and hence Body. (Ratzinger 1988, pp. 72-3)

Ratzinger's interpretation affirms Mary as the primary ecclesial reality of the feminine Church (*Ecclesia*), established not as a society formed by human choice but rather by a living Marian mystery of maternity and bridal love in duality with the masculine Christ.

The notion of Mary as the primary ecclesial reality is named the "Marian principle" or "Marian mystery" of the Church. In the Marian mystery of the Catholic Church, the feminine designations – mother, virgin, and bride – are more than just metaphors for church. They underline the post-conciliar ecclesial imaginary and assert a fundamental feminine understanding of the Church's essence, directly linking the enactment of gender roles and responsibilities to the salvation of humanity. In his apostolic letter on the dignity and vocation of women, John Paul II explains:

> The [Second Vatican] Council has confirmed that, unless one looks to the Mother of God, it is impossible to understand the mystery of the Church, her reality, her essential vitality. Indirectly we find here a reference to the biblical exemplar of the "woman" which is already clearly outlined in the description of the "beginning" (cf. Gen 3:15) and which proceeds from creation, through sin to the Redemption. In this way there is a confirmation of the profound union between what is human and what constitutes the

> divine economy of salvation in human history. The Bible convinces us of the fact that one can have no adequate hermeneutic of man, or of what is "human," without appropriate reference to what is "feminine". There is an analogy in God's salvific economy: if we wish to understand it fully in relation to the whole of human history, we cannot omit, in the perspective of our faith, the mystery of "woman": virgin-mother-spouse. (MD, para. 22)

The notion of Mary as the mystery of the Church being central to ecclesiology has its origins in the symbolic marriage motif of the Hebrew Scriptures where the covenantal love between Yahweh and his people is described as the love between bride and bridegroom (Ephesians 5:21-33; Leonard 1995; Lledo Gomez 2018; MD, para. 24). Lledo Gomez (2018) elucidates:

> The parallels are clear between the image of Zion/ Jerusalem city as a woman and the Christian vision of the church as mother, queen, bride, or other female figure, even if there are no direct scriptural links between the two. The female Zion as its people, their history, the dwelling place of God, and Zion's future, the place of salvation, can be viewed as paralleling the female church as its people, their history, a place to worship God, and the locus of salvation. (p. 12)

In the Marian Church, the spousal relationship between Christ as bridegroom and Mary as his Church and bride is essential in God's plan for the salvation of humanity (MD, para. 24; Ratzinger 1980). Herein, the spousal love between humanity and God finds its fulfilment and 'deepest source in Christ, who is the bridegroom of the Church, his bride' (II, para. 25). For the redemption of humanity, members of the feminine Church are called to respond, as bride, to the spousal love of the bridegroom, Christ (Helman 2012; II, para. 25).

The distinct protagonists, the bride and bridegroom, inscribe cultural-religious gender assumptions and make the hierarchical-clerical ordering of Church central to the salvation of all humanity, but especially women (Beattie 2018). The womanly and bridal essence of the Marian Church is exemplified in Mary as the virginal bride who is both

Mother of God and Church. In her maternity and receptivity, the ecclesial imaginary centres on Mary as Church guiding humankind to its definitive and transcendent destiny, giving life direction, and instructing and nurturing humanity to follow the right path (Francis 2013; LW, para. 9-11). Like Mary, humanity reaches their final goal by fidelity to his or her own vocation as a specific part of God's plan (Helman 2012; LW, para. 9-11). For women, this vocation is characterised by Mary as "handmaid", who serves humanity in affective, cultural, and spiritual motherhood (Helman 2012; MD, para. 5). John Paul II, in his letter to women, clarifies, as follows:

> in their common task of exercising dominion over the earth, woman and man are marked neither by a static and undifferentiated equality nor by an irreconcilable and inexorably conflictual difference … Each one reaches this final goal by fidelity to his or her own vocation … there is great significance to that "womanhood" which was lived in such a sublime way by Mary. In fact, there is present in the "womanhood" of a woman who believes, and especially in a woman who is "consecrated," a kind of inherent "prophecy," a powerfully evocative symbolism, a highly significant "iconic character," which finds its full realization in Mary and which also aptly expresses the very essence of the Church as a community consecrated with the integrity of a "virgin" heart to become the "bride" of Christ and "mother" of believers. When we consider the "iconic" complementarity of male and female roles, two of the Church's essential dimensions are seen in a clearer light: the "Marian" principle and the Apostolic-Petrine principle. (LW, paras. 9-11)

The gendered soteriology of an ecclesiology centred on the Marian mystery of the Church forms the basis of magisterial constructions of womanhood and femininity in Catholicism. In the remainder of this chapter, I will present and analyse magisterial ecclesiology, Mariology, and constructions of womanhood and femininity, and discuss their implications for Gen X women.

4.3 Magisterial ecclesiology

In the decades after Vatican II, instead of promoting the full equality of women as baptised human persons, the magisterium has drawn on the Marian mystery of the Church to construct an ecclesiology that uses medieval interpretations of anthropology and human biology to preserve the myth of gender complementarity and limit the role and agency of women in Catholicism (Case 2016; Imperatori-Lee 2015; Madigan 2018). Despite promising beginnings early in the papacy of Paul VI (1963–78), the 1976 declaration of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Inter Insigiores (On the Admission of Women to the Ministerial Priesthood)* pronounces that the female body lacks sacramental significance (Madigan 2018). It states:

> the priest is a sign, the supernatural effectiveness of which comes from the ordination received, but a sign that must be perceptible and which the faithful must be able to recognise with ease … "Sacramental signs," says Saint Thomas, "represent what they signify by natural resemblance". The same natural resemblance is required for persons as for things: when Christ's role in the Eucharist is to be expressed sacramentally, there would not be this "natural resemblance" which must exist between Christ and his minister if the role of Christ were not taken by a man: in such a case it would be difficult to see in the minister the image of Christ. For Christ himself was and remains a man. (II, para. 5)

The decree prevents women from being called to the sacrament of holy orders as only men can image Christ, represent the bridegroom, and undertake Christ's apostolic ministry (CCC, para. 1142; Helman 2012; II, para. 5).

During the papacy of John Paul II (1978–2005) a whole new vocabulary and ecclesiology was constructed that defined 'a positive role of women in the Church while at the same time providing a theological justification for the exclusion of women from the sacramental priesthood' (Madigan 2018, p. 89). In his 1988 papal encyclical *Mulierius Digniatem (The Dignity of Women)*, John Paul II claims that women, because of their

biological capacity for motherhood, best exemplify the femininity of the Church through "feminine" expressions known as the "genius of woman" (Helman 2012; MD, paras. 30-31; Ross 2001; Schüssler Fiorenza 2016). John Paul II locates sexual difference as anthropological, not arbitrary, revealed in the order of creation and of grace, asserting 'it is a relationship willed by God both in the mystery of creation and in the mystery of redemption' (MD, para. 26).

In a series of lectures given between 1979–84, John Paul II developed a theology of sexuality, gender, and relationship, which is popularly known as the *Theology of the Body* (Ross 2012). In this particular application of gender complementarity, John Paul II characterises "man and woman" in their orientation to each other, only complete when they live out their reciprocity, 'not just in the macro level of society but also in the micro level of a heterosexual marriage, which provides the telos of the human person' (Grimes 2016, p. 77). Even though the ecclesiology of John Paul II's papacy might appeal to women seeking a more authoritarian, fundamentalist style of Catholicism, its obscuration of women's subordination in Catholicism is problematic.

4.4 The theology and ecclesiology of Hans Urs von Balthasar

The theology of Swiss theologian, Hans Urs von Balthasar, rose to prominence during the papacy of John Paul II and continued to appear in magisterial teachings on sex and gender propagated during Benedict XVI's pontificate (Imperatori-Lee 2015).[7] Balthasar's writings situate the God-world relationship and ecclesiology in sexual difference and the metaphor of nuptiality (Vasko 2014). In his major work *Theo-Drama* (1992), Balthasar puts forward that an unequal, gendered male-female polarity that exists transcendently in

[7] The extent of Balthasar's influence on contemporary Mariology and ecclesiology is demonstrated by the citing of his work in an encyclical of John Paul II and *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC, para. 773; MD, para. 27).

God is a fundamental feature of human nature. He argues that the male-female binary functions in such a way that if God's word *logos* became man in Christ Jesus, two things must follow. First, if 'the One who comes forth from the Father is designated, as a human being he must be a man if his mission is to represent the Origin, the Father, in the world' (Balthasar 1992, p. 284). Second, that just as the first Adam is incomplete without Eve (Genesis 2-3), the woman who came forth from his side, the second Adam, the incarnate Christ Jesus, is 'incomplete without the woman from his side' (Balthasar 1992, p. 283). This woman – who is both Mary and the feminine Church – is designed to complement the man, Jesus Christ, as his bride. The nuptial metaphor and Christ-Mary relationship provides what Balthasar (1992) purports is the starting point of 'woman's nature and task' (p. 284). Woman, as the bride of Christ, Balthasar (1992) maintains, 'is not only man's delight: she is the help, the security, the home man needs; she is the vessel of fulfilment designed for him' (p. 285). Consequently, woman exists not on her own; rather, she finds the purpose and essence of her existence in her secondary relativity to man as bride, spouse, and mother (Balthasar 1992).

Developing his anthropology of sexual difference and metaphorical use of nuptiality, Balthasar (1980, 1992) uses the theological significance of the Christ-Mary relationship to theorise a hierarchical-clerical model of Church. Herein, the maternity and virginity of Mary are central to, and inseparably united because, in her nuptial union with Christ, Mary as Church lives only for Christ and is therefore able to respond to God's grace with virginal and maternal fruitfulness for the redemption of humankind (Balthasar 1980). Elisabeth Vasko (2014) explains, as follows:

> Contrasted with the sinful no of humanity, Marian holiness is marked by an eternal obedient receptivity (yes) to the generative seed of God. Moreover, this yes within Balthasar's dramatic soteriology is more than simply a representation of Christian holiness; it plays a pivotal role in the restoration and fulfillment of the covenant between

> God and creation. Mary's virginal receptivity recapitulates creation's response (feminine) to the divine offer of self-gift (masculine). Throughout all of history, Mary, as the second Eve, stands in solidarity with humanity and responds obediently in our place. (pp. 514-5)

Balthasar's statements not only deny women access to ecclesial office but also name women as submissive receptors of male-created knowledge and power (Imperatori-Lee 2015). In his ecclesial vision, Balthasar uses the terms the "Marian" and the "Petrine" Church to differentiate between the "subjective" experiential faith of women and the feminine laity and the "objective" institutionalised faith of male clerical Catholicism (O'Connell 2008/9). Balthasar (1980) pronounces that the Petrine or masculine dimension of Church are the 'more active and fruitful members' (p. 135), representing the 'true giver, the Lord' (p. 40). In comparison, he locates the Marian Church, women and the feminine laity, at the other 'end of the spectrum … who passively content themselves with receiving the Church's treasures of grace and knowing that they have God and the Church to thank for them' (Balthasar 1980, p. 135). Herein, the male-only clerical office, the masculine Petrine component of the Church, is generative and women and the feminine laity who make up the Marian component are receptive (Balthasar 1989). The functions of the Church belong in the capacity of the feminine, Marian Church to generate or give new life. Femininity is not dominance or comprehension, as that belongs to the Petrine office of the Church; rather, the surrender of the laity and women is 'of humble and hand maidenly following and service' (Balthasar 1989, p. 165). In this motif, only the Petrine Church can give "seed" to new life within the Church and only men have agency and control over the female body of the Church (Balthasar 1989). The Church as the feminine, bride of Christ is not an embodied woman; as a virgin receiver of man's seed, she has no agency. Indeed, Balthasar (1980) argues that the Petrine Church has been instituted to prevent the feminine Church 'from forgetting this primary reality,

to ensure that she will always remain a receiver and never become self-assertive possessor and user' (pp. 139-40). Balthasar's construal of the laity and women as the obedient Marian Church limits the role of women in Catholicism and negates their experience as a legitimate and valid source of ecclesial reflection.

The ecclesial vision of Balthasar is highly problematic, particularly in light of its visibility and influence in magisterial theology and the post-conciliar, papal ecclesial imaginary, including John Paul II's nuptial ecclesiology and *Theology of the Body* (Beattie 2016; Thatcher 2020), the scholarship of Benedict XVI (Ratzinger 1988; Thatcher 2020), and the statements of Francis regarding women's role in Catholicism (Francis 2019; Thatcher 2020). Of significant concern is the underlying images of sexual violence in Balthasar's theology and ecclesiology, particularly in his graphic and often erotic expression of the nuptial love between Christ and his Church (Beattie 2006; Thatcher 2020; Vasko 2014). Balthasar's portrayal of the surrender of Mary to God in the incarnation and at the foot of the cross is sexualised and erotic. Elisabeth Vasko (2014) observes, as follows:

> Balthasar's rhetoric is embedded in a gendered framework that makes many of its points at women's expense. The metaphors he employs not only reinscribe the androcentric identification of the female body, sin, and guilt into the drama of redemption; they also mirror the reality of sexual violence. (p. 527)

In *Heart of the World* (1979), Balthasar writes in the first person, creating a "poetic" description of the consummation of nuptial love between Christ, as bridegroom and his Church, the bride. He writes the following:

> Just as you, passionately, with throbbing pulse, cross over temptation's boundary, so, too, have I crossed over the boundary of the flesh with a quivering heart, fully conscious of the danger. I dared to enter the body of my Church, the deadly body which you are … And so, from now on, we are no longer two but, together, only one flesh which loves itself and which struggles and wages battle with itself even to the point of death. For

> your sake I became weak, since I could experience your being only in weakness. No wonder you realized your advantage over me and took my nakedness by storm! But I have defeated you through weakness and my Spirit has overpowered my unruly and recalcitrant flesh. (Never has woman made more desperate resistance!) In order to put a seal on my victory and exploit my triumph, I have engraved a mark upon you, O my flesh: on your carnal weakness I have engraved the mark of my own carnal weakness, and on your sin the mark of my love. Never again will your sinful battle against me be anything other than the long wrestling of love … Bind yourself to me so irrevocably that I will be able to descend to hell with you; and then I will bind you to myself so irrevocably that, with me, you will be able to ascend to very heaven. Empty yourself out into me so completely that I can fill you with myself … You will experience how greatly servitude follows the coercion of love. (Balthasar 1979, n.p.)

This vivid and erotic imagery, that has the nuptial relationship between Christ and the Church consummated in an act of sexual violence, is troubling. Tina Beattie (2006) explains:

> [T]he real scandal of this theological vision, with its deep undercurrents of misogyny and sexual violence and its repellent ecclesiology, is its uncritical reiteration by a growing number of theologians, translators and interpreters, who appear either indifferent or oblivious to Balthasar's sexual violence. (p. 182)

The sexual imagery in Balthasar's work and its uncritical reception are disturbing, particularly when contextualised with the prevalence of sexual violence against women in Australian society and churches, and the scandal of CPCSA in the Catholic Church in Australia and abroad.

4.5 Pope Francis: A new vision for the Church?

When Jorge Mario Bergoglio began his papacy as Francis in 2013, he refreshed hope for a less patriarchal and more inclusive Church for women. To date, while his approach regarding Catholic teachings on gender articulates a pastoral approach, it does not signal an impending change (Case 2016). Early in his pontificate, he expressed a need for the

magisterium to recognise the "feminine genius" in decision-making and to develop a profound theology of womanhood. In an interview with Anthony Spadaro, Francis said:

> It is necessary to broaden the opportunities for a stronger presence of women in the church. I am wary of a solution that can be reduced to a kind of "female machismo," because a woman has a different make-up than a man. But what I hear about the role of women is often inspired by an ideology of machismo. Women are asking deep questions that must be addressed. The church cannot be herself without the woman and her role. The woman is essential for the church. Mary, a woman, is more important than the bishops. I say this because we must not confuse the function with the dignity. We must therefore investigate further the role of women in the church. We have to work harder to develop a profound theology of the woman. Only by making this step will it be possible to better reflect on their function within the church. The feminine genius is needed wherever we make important decisions. The challenge today is this: to think about the specific place of women also in those places where the authority of the church is exercised for various areas of the church. (Francis, cited in Spadaro 2013, n.p.)

In separating women as a special group in the Catholic Church, Francis continues to iterate the normativity of men. When he refers to women, 'he sometimes seems more committed to the idea of woman than to women's realities' (Beattie 2018, p. 3). In his apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium (The Joy of the Gospel),* Francis uses the language of John Paul II to describe the Church as feminine, embracing everything involving motherhood, and calls for women to use their "feminine genius" (EG, para. 104). In another instance, he notes the following:

> the gift of every mother and every woman, is most precious for the Church, for she too is mother and woman. While a man often abstracts, affirms and imposes ideas, a woman, a mother, knows how to 'keep,' to put things together in her heart, to give life. (Francis 2018, n.p.)

In discussions about the role of women in Catholicism, Francis takes up the language of gender complementarity used by John Paul II (Francis 2019) and exhorts the

Marian and Petrine separation championed by Balthasar (Francis 2016b). Continuing the use of Mary as archetype of the feminine Church and women, he remarks:

> Mary is our Mother. She is the Mother of our people. She is the Mother of us all. She is the Mother of the Church, but she is also the image of the Church. And she is the Mother of our hearts, of our souls … We cannot think of the Church without this Marian principle. When we research the role of women in the Church, we can follow the path of functionality because women have functions to perform in the Church. But this is only half the journey. Women in the Church achieve more with this Marian principle which "maternalizes" the Church and transforms it into Holy Mother Church. (Francis 2019, para.7-9)

Furthermore, when explaining his decision to modify Church law to give women access to the ministries of lector and acolyte, Francis (2021) explores the distinction between lay and ordained ministries. He states:

> In the course of history, with the changing of ecclesial, social, cultural situations, the exercise of ministries in the Catholic Church has assumed different forms, while the distinction, not only of degree, remains intact between "instituted" (or "lay") ministries and the "ordained" ministries. The former are particular expressions of the priestly and royal condition of every baptized person; the latter are proper to certain members of the People of God who as bishops and priests "receive the mission and capacity to act in the person of Christ the Head" or as deacons "are empowered to serve the People of God in the ministries of the liturgy, the word and charity". (Francis 2021, para. 4)

In his reiteration of the distinction between non-ordained (or lay) ministries and priestly ordination, Francis (2021) reinforces the reciprocity between baptismal priesthood and ordained priesthood. Thus, Francis (2021) permits women to participate in lay ministries without revising or reconsidering the admission of women to priestly ordination. Therefore, despite claims to advocate the fundamental equality and dignity of women, Francis' statements appear to be directed towards the retention of a clerical order and ecclesiology that supports the subordination of women.

4.6 The ecclesiology of *Laudato Si'*

The soteriological vision presented by Francis in his papal encyclical *Laudato Si'* (*on care for our common home*) represents a shift in Catholic ecclesiological and social thought. In *Laudato Si'*, Francis asserts that 'human life is grounded in three fundamental and closely intertwined relationships with God, with our neighbour and with the earth itself' (LS, para. 66). The mystery of Christ, and therefore the Church, is bound with the destiny of all creation, such that 'from the beginning of the world, but particularly through the incarnation, the mystery of Christ is at work in a hidden manner in the natural world as a whole' (LS, para. 99). Linking all creation in 'a sublime communion' (LS, para. 89), Francis expresses that 'everything is related, and we human beings are united … woven together by the love God has for each of his creatures' (LS, para. 92). Here, the use of the word communion confers a vision of Church and society where human beings are 'united with other creatures in one community of creation' (Edwards 2017, p. 85). This extends a radically relational paradigm of interconnection where neither humanity nor creation can prosper outside their relationship with each other and God (LS, para. 66-7). In *Laudato Si'*, Francis recognises and acknowledges the interconnectedness of all creatures and addresses the need to care for the environment in the context of climate crisis. However, any contribution of *Laudato Si'* to an ecclesial vision where women's dignity and equality is embraced and celebrated is limited by Francis' inadequate engagement with feminist and womanist scholarship and his problematic use of *kyriarchal* constructs (Brazal 2021; Flores 2018).

In the introductory paragraphs of *Laudato Si'*, Francis reproduces the language of Francis of Assisi when he refers to earth as 'Sister, Mother Earth' (LS, para. 1). Herein, nature is represented in the language of gender complementarity as woman; a mother that

nourishes and sustains, and a vulnerable sister that is "plundered" and exploited. Francis writes the following:

> This sister now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her. We have come to see ourselves as her lords and masters, entitled to plunder her at will. The violence present in our hearts, wounded by sin, is also reflected in the symptoms of sickness evident in the soil, in the water, in the air and in all forms of life. This is why the earth herself, burdened and laid waste, is among the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor; she "groans in travail". (Romans 8:22) (LS, para. 2)

Thus, the *kyriarchal*, lord/master model of familiar kinship, set out by Francis of Assisi, is proposed in *Laudato Si'* as a template of care where humanity is 'called to care for all that exist' (LS, para. 11). This gendered imagery and language requires further critique.

When Francis uses the language of family, kinship, and care in *Laudato Si'*, he speaks of a common home (LS, paras. 17, 53, 61, 164). In Catholicism, the home is the domestic sphere, a place generally associated with women. Women, especially those in developing countries, frequently carry the burden of care for the home and environment and are generally more vulnerable to climate change and ecological destruction (Brazal 2021). Constructions of gender in religious organisations and broader society are orientated so that women and the earth are subject to the headship of men (Flores 2018). In Australia and across the world, women and girls are subjected to all types of violence, particularly domestic and family violence (Pepper & Powell 2021; Pepper, Powell & McEwan 2021; UN Women 2021). In *Laudato Si'*, Francis does not critique the *kyriarchal* home/family model of male headship or the structures and constructs that it imposes in Catholicism. Yet, studies of domestic and family violence have found that perpetrators misuse Christian teachings that claim the headship of men to extend patterns of violence (Pepper, Powell & McEwan 2021). Any possibility of an ecclesiology that

supports women depends on undermining the problems of male headship, *kyriarchy,* and gender subordination that have become normative in both the Catholic tradition and modern societies. Therefore, even though in *Laudato Si'* Francis expresses an ecological and theological vision based on a type of relational solidarity, he does not present a viable theological foundation for an ecclesiology that supports women's dignity and equality.

4.7 Magisterial Mariology

Discourse about Mary is a significant feature of the post-conciliar magisterial ecclesiology. Yet, little of the Mary of magisterial Mariology bears any resemblance to the narrative of the first-century Jewish woman, Miram of Nazareth, the mother of Jesus, that appears in the Christian Scriptures and *Qur'an* of Islam (Johnson 2006). The origins of the Mary of the magisterial ecclesial imaginary and Mariology can be found in the Hebrew Scriptures, the Apocrypha, and early patristic authors (Johnson 2006; Warner 2016).

The magisterium declared Mary *theotókos* (the Mother of God) at the Council of Ephesus (431 C.E.) and the *Dei parthénos* (God's perpetual virgin) at the Lateral Synod of 649 C.E. (Halkes 1983). These pronouncements use classical Christology to describe Mary's motherhood and role in the incarnation. Here, in an androcentric gynaecology, Mary's role is to be the passive receptacle of the divine seed and the virginal human mother of the divine child (Børresen 1983). Kari Elisabeth Børresen (1983) purports that these gynaecological presuppositions became no longer viable with the discovery of the mammalian ovule by von Baer in 1827. After this, with Son and Father sharing a common divinity, the focus shifted towards Mary's role in the incarnation. This changed and refocused Mariology towards "divine Motherhood" and what Børresen names 'salvation gynaecology' (Børresen 1983, p. 50). Mary's location in salvation history distinguished

her as the new Eve at 'the threshold of the new humanity, the mother … in whom God made a new beginning' (Brown et al. 1978, p. 256). This typology, which identifies Christ as the new Adam and Mary as the new Eve, serves to extend and transpose androcentric interpretations of the Genesis creation myth into the order of redemption (Beattie 2002). Nuptial symbolism is used in this imagery with a *kyriarchal* assumption of subordination. Børresen (1983) argues, as follows:

> Whereas Christ took flesh in the exemplary and normative sex of Adam, Mary represented the secondary, derived sex of Eve. As the redeemer, Christ is the new Adam, while the Church is the new eve, his wife and helpmeet in the work of salvation. (p. 50)

Even though such understandings serve to reinforce the receptive, dependent relationship that exists between humanity and God, they also perpetuate *kyriarchal* theology and ecclesiology where women are subordinate.

Later dogmas announced Mary's Immaculate Conception (exemption from original sin, 1854) (CCC, para. 491) and bodily Assumption into heaven (1950) establishing Mary as unique, blessed, and working in union with her son (CCC, para. 966). The dogmatic definition of the Immaculate Conception in magisterial teaching confirmed that Mary was set apart in human history and was exempt from original sin (CCC, paras. 390, 491; Johnson 2006). The dogma of the Assumption depends on and presupposes the Christian equivalence between sin and death. It confirms the purity of Mary in both her virginity and freedom from original sin and consequently ensures her freedom from the corruption of the grave (Børresen 1983; Warner 2016). When Mary is assumed 'body and soul into heavenly glory and exalted by the Lord as Queen over all things' (LG, para. 59), she is set further apart from humanity and, in her eschatological glory, becomes fully conformed with God (Johnson 2006). Rather than making Mary a realistic and achievable paradigm for women, magisterial Mariology and the

juxtaposition of characteristics attributed to Mary by post-conciliar magisterial ecclesiology result in a measure and model of holiness and femininity that is both unrealistic and unattainable. Yet, despite this, the ubiquitous presence of Mary continues to be appropriated by contemporary Catholic women in Australia (McEwan 2018).

4.8 Popular expressions of devotion

Popular expressions of devotion in Catholicism include practices such as the Rosary, pilgrimages, processions, religious dancing, medals, and the veneration of relics, the Virgin Mary, and the saints (CCC, para. 1674). Official Catholicism views such expressions of piety as an extension rather than replacement of the liturgical life of the Church (CCC, para. 1675). In accordance with this, the magisterium seeks to limit and correct devotional practices where necessary to maintain the continuum between official liturgical celebrations and popular pieties (CCC, para. 1675-6; Mong 2019). In practice, however, popular expressions of devotion and piety in Catholicism often exist on the margins of official Catholicism (McPhillips 2006; Mong 2019).

There is some scholarship that suggests women and other subjugated groups privately subvert magisterial attempts to synchronise expressions of piety and constructions of Mary in order to survive and be sustained in a *kyriarchal* Catholic Church and society (Calderón Muñoz 2014; McPhillips 2006; Mong 2019). The extent to which the Rosary and devotion to Marian apparitions and the saint, Mary MacKillop, form part of the rich tapestry of popular pieties and Marian devotion utilised by Catholic women in Australia has not been adequately explored. In this thesis, I will examine the adoption of Mariology and popular pieties, in terms of both practices and meanings, by Gen X Catholic women in my sample.

4.8.1 The Rosary

The Rosary is a form of Marian devotion used by Catholics to honour Mary (CCC, para. 971). When praying the Rosary, a string of knots or beads is used to count component prayers. Despite the complicated and convoluted theologies associated with Mary, the Rosary continues to be a common form of Catholic piety in Australia (McEwan 2018). Recent studies have shown that Mass attendees from Gen X are increasingly using the Rosary as part of weekly prayer practice (McEwan 2018). The reasons for this upsurge in Marian devotion in Australia has not been the subject of research.

4.8.2 Marian apparitions

Apparitions are appearances on earth of heavenly beings, including Christ, Mary, an angel, or a saint (CCC, paras. 641, 659). The magisterium assesses apparitions and estimates whether it is "worthy of belief"; not every apparition is granted this status and even once granted, no Catholic adherent is ever "bound" to believe (CCC, para. 67). For centuries, people around the world have reported appearances of the Mary, the mother of Jesus. Known as Marian apparitions, these appearances are complex phenomena grounded in 'both the subjective experiences of Marian seers and the social forces that shape how these experiences are interpreted' (Krebs & Laycock 2017a, p. 207). Since colonisation, migrant groups have brought to Australia long traditions associated with Marian apparitions, celebrations, processions, and festivals, involving various Marian images and devotions (Kahl 2017). The various Marian apparitions that have been reported throughout the world since the eighteenth century have resulted in an upsurge of devotion to Mary (Warner 2016).

Despite authoritative magisterial reminders of the peripheral nature of Marian apparitions, people continue to hold events and pilgrimages at apparition sites; the

medals, literature, and merchandise they generate remain popular (Malone 2019). For instance, Medjugorje in Bosnia–Herzegovina has attracted millions of pilgrims since reports of apparitions of Mary first began in 1981 (Klimek 2018). Even though the magisterium has not authenticated the initial or ongoing apparitions at Medjugorje and, only in 2019 officially authorised pilgrimages to the site, pilgrims visit, pray, and seek healing (Klimek 2018; Menichetti 2019). Jill M. Krebs and Joseph Laycock (2017b) contend:

> Devotional cults surrounding apparitions and pilgrimage sites often reinforce Catholic identity by encouraging confession, Mass attendance, and popular practices like Eucharistic Adoration and rosary prayers. The case of Medjugorje illustrates the extent to which even unapproved apparitions – that is, apparitions not officially recognized as supernatural and worthy of belief by the highest Church authorities – can be brought within institutional control. (p. 6)

Several Marian apparitions have been reported in Australia. For example, the appearance of Mary at Yankalilla and Coogee, and a weeping statue of Mary at Rockingham (McPhillips 2006). While popular, these Marian appearances have received less attention than overseas apparitions (Kahl 2017; McPhillips 2006; O'Connell 2008/9). Kathleen McPhillips (2006) argues that, in contemporary Australia, Marian apparitions present believers with alternative ways of seeing and believing, providing anchor points between secular and sacred experience that 'give individuals tools for negotiating and developing identity and ethics within shifting discursive frameworks' (p. 152). Some Australian Marian sites have associations with Saint Mary MacKillop (Kahl 2017; McPhillips 2006).

4.8.3 Australian sainthood: Saint Mary MacKillop of the Cross

Canonisation is the process by which the papacy declares that a person is a saint, to be venerated by Catholics because of their place in heaven and ability to intercede on behalf

of the living directly with God (Bennett 2011). Mary MacKillop, Australia's first saint and co-founder of Australia's first order of women religious – the *Institute of the Sisters of Saint Joseph of the Sacred Heart* – was canonised on 17 October 2010 (McPhillips 2013). Recognised for her humble commitment to social justice and equality in education, MacKillop is venerated by many Australian Catholics for her 'deep respect for the innate dignity of humanity, and a compassion which heightened her vision of a better life for the poor' (Lewis 2010, p. 63). MacKillop's tenacity and commitment to self-governance for her order, however, placed her at odds with the clerical authority of her time. McPhillips (2013) explains:

> She insisted on the independence of the order from local clergy and was very much in the public realm. Such work brought her under the scrutiny of the male hierarchy. Their attempts to manage her public visibility, to restrict her movement, and to bring her under local church control indicate just how important gender order was to the development of an Australian state and church. In this she is certainly not unlike other saints, whose function has been partly to provide the laity with forms of folk religion that reflect their own experiences of faith, and partly to provide the Catholic Church with role models of appropriate femininity and masculinity. (p. 31)

At odds with this social radicalism, MacKillop's major biographies seek to expand her more positive virtues and minimise her interactions that placed her in direct confrontation with established authority and resulted in her excommunication (Hooper 2018). In this way, her biographies function as hagiography with the specific purpose of elevating the cult of Mary MacKillop and producing a saint who is recognisable as a Catholic feminine subject (Hooper 2018; McPhillips 2013). Revelations that linked clerical hostility to MacKillop's reform agenda to a cover-up of paedophilia and sexual abuse come as the Catholic Church in Australia faces a crisis following revelations of CPCSA and associated cover-ups by Catholic authorities (Maley 2010). Therefore, even though MacKillop's appropriation for various political agenda makes her 'deeply

problematic for women seeking models of female sacrality' (McPhillips 2013, p. 39), her iconoclastic life and opposition to clerical misconduct enable her to be a guide for Catholic women as they seek to find their place in official Catholicism.

4.9 Marian devotion

Mary, the mother of Jesus, has been welcomed in vision and apparition throughout Christian history and has been appropriated in a multitude of images and metaphors that frequently clash and contradict each other (Malone 2019). Gendered and sexual paradigms in Mariology and popular pieties do create serious difficulties for contemporary feminism. In conjunction with the feminine imagery utilised in the post-conciliar magisterial ecclesiology, they support a dualistic sex/gender framework that regulates and limits opportunity for Gen X Catholic women. For instance, some feminist scholars claim that Marian devotions reinforce a theology of womanhood that supports a limited feminine vocation and reduces womanliness to a demure acquiescence of a life of servitude to others (McPhillips 2006; Pope 1985; Warner 2016). Yet, women continue to turn to Marian devotion and other forms of piety, as both a source of comfort and consolation, and a way of celebrating, mourning, and remembering significant events in their lives (Johnson 2006). Mary Malone (2019) contends:

> Mary has been present with [women] at birth and death and as a source of encouragement in poverty, hardship and suffering. For most of these people, the theological difficulties of this symbolic elevation of Mary have not been a concern. Mary, the Mother of all has Godlike powers of comfort and help. (p. 145)

Although some Mariology can be placed in a context of reactionary Catholicism, which allows the magisterium 'to derive power and prestige from the myth of Mary' (O'Connell 2008/9, p. 71), an alternative reading situates Marian devotion as an 'inversion and subversion of the status quo' (O'Connell 2008/9, p. 71).

In contexts where populations are marginalised, Mariology and Marian devotion have been used as a source of emancipation from oppressive *kyriarchal* ideologies (Althaus-Reid & Isherwood 2007; Calderón Muñoz 2014). For instance, María Calderón Muñoz (2014) found in her study of Catholic women in Quito, Ecuador, that women strongly identified with Mary as role model, protector, and mother. Furthermore, they regarded Mary not 'as an afflicted figure or victim, but instead as a brave and empowered woman' (Calderón Muñoz 2014, p. 59). Calderón Muñoz (2014) argues that contrary to magisterial Mariology that emphasises Mary's obedience and chastity, the women she interviewed have taken ownership of Mary as 'an icon of resistance of male-imposed Catholic rules' (p. 59).

Over time, attitudes and teachings around Mary have changed significantly (Monagle 2020; Warner 2016). The material gains women have achieved in secular society, and the momentum for change brought about by Vatican II, have given women a greater awareness of their rights and dignity as human persons. Elizabeth Johnson (2006) contends that, as part of this emerging awareness, women are 'interpreting the figure of Mary from the perspective of their won struggle to be independent, strong, lively, and holy' (p. 6). Feminist theologies do celebrate and promote 'the full humanity of the diversity of women' (Johnson 2006, p. 19). The experiences of all women should be respected as a source of theological and ecclesial reflection. However, Mariology has an underlying sexist construal of gender and its ongoing use by the magisterium and others to legitimise *kyriarchal* structures is problematic. For instance, Marcella Althaus-Reid and Lisa Isherwood (2007) propose that understandings of class, race, and culture in magisterial Mariology present difficulties for contemporary feminists who seek to deconstruct *kyriarchal*, clerical presentations of Mary as a poor, young, vulnerable

woman of colour. Accordingly, Mariology and Marian pieties do need to be critically deconstructed.

4.10 The myth of the perfect mother, virgin, and bride

In post-conciliar magisterial ecclesiology, the virginity and motherhood of Mary are inseparably united in the imagery of the Catholic Church as virgin, bride, and mother. This locates Mary and Catholic womanhood in the replication of a dichotomous ideal, rather than a woman who lives, births, and mothers. In his Gospel, Luke shares the nativity story of Jesus (Luke 2:1-20). Of Mary, the mother of Jesus and the locus of the nativity story, he writes, 'And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn' (Luke 2:7). Later, readers of Luke are told of the angel of the Lord and the shepherds announcing the birth, but from Mary there is only silence. Luke reports, 'But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart' (Luke 2:19). Some years later, in the Gospel of John, Mary is at the foot of the cross when Jesus places her in the care of the 'beloved disciple' (John 19: 26-27). Again, Mary has no spoken words recorded in the episode; 'so we can only imagine her distress and horror at the sight she witnesses' (O'Donnell 2020, loc. 722). Writing about the absence of Mary from her own story, Carol P. Christ (1992) asserts:

> Her word never became flesh and dwelt among us. Perhaps no one ever asked her what she was thinking. Perhaps she never heard stories which could give her words for her own experience. Perhaps the man who wrote the gospel narrative could not imagine what it felt like to be in her position. (p. 230)

Without any account of Mary's own words, over time, her story has been embellished and distorted by *kyriarchal* metaphors and imagery (Pope 1985). Johnson (2006) purports:

> [Mary] has been symbolized to such an extravagant degree divorced from her own history – symbol of the maternal face of God, of the eternal feminine, of the disciple, of the idealized church – that approaching her as an actual human being surprises us with the discovery that she too struggled in her own life's journey. (p. xiv)

In this sense, it might be said that the ecclesial vision of the Catholic Church as Mary is abstract and disembodied.

In Catholic ecclesiology Mary exemplifies womanhood and motherhood, with the clerical hierarchy representative of masculine Christ and a paternal God (Balthasar 1980, 1992). These conceptions of ecclesial maternity and priestly paternity are located in parenthood without pregnancy, childbirth, or children. Herein, the everyday experiences of humanity have been abandoned and, although the Church is Mother Mary, she is like no other woman. Natalie Knodel (1997) argues:

> Such disembodiment of sexuality, the exaltation of the absence of sex, is not a subversion of established gender categories, but the affirmation of a patriarchal system which is oppressive and confusing for everyone, men and women. It is not the affirmation of sexuality as such or of human sexuality as a place where ecclesial authority takes place, but the sanctioning of a patriarchal ecclesial order that renders women, their lives and their discourses of faith non-existent outside the patriarchal order and restricts men to either fitting into a particular patriarchal construction of "masculinity" or else to be rendered "feminine". (p. 112)

As I have stated above, there are few scriptural references to Mary as a mother and, in the absence of any quotidian experience, Mary's maternity has been elevated (Beattie 2002, 2018; Lledo Gomez 2015; Monagle 2020). Indeed, Catholic magisterial tradition reflects an overtly positive perspective on Mary's experience. For instance, Mary's suffering at the foot of the cross is described as being composed and dignified, rather than raw and disturbing, placing it at odds with the grief experience of many mothers at the loss of a child. Mary, as the perfect mother, is not a historical reality; rather, she stands for a religious myth that supports clerical power structures and hegemonic

control. Therefore, while the metaphor of Church as mother provides a potentially rich image, it fails to contextualise the complex, mundane, and often challenging task of physical motherhood.

The model of motherhood that magisterial ecclesiology elucidates fails to recognise the everyday reality of childbirth and motherhood and assumes a model of birthing and being a mother that is unrealistic and unobtainable. Clare Monagle (2020) asserts:

> Somehow, magically, [Mary] is pure and beatific, untroubled by what has transpired. She has not given birth to pain; she has painlessly given birth to salvation. Obviously, her experience is not typical. The new mother oozes, her body is porous, and it in turn cleaves to the infant and then separates from her. Few things can rigorously be said to be universal. That babies are born from bodies with wombs is one of those few things. And that this process is abject, dangerous, fraught, and very messy is another of those rare universals. And that it takes an enormous amount of utterly necessary life-preserving work to keep those babies alive for the first year of their life is also a transhistorical fact. Mary is kept outside of this danger, this risk, and this mess. This is some erasure. (p. 10-11)

In Australia, one in three women refer to their birth experience as traumatic and 15 to 20 per cent of all first-time mothers suffer long-term physical injuries from childbirth (ABTA 2020). Ignoring the emotional and physical pain of childbirth can cause lasting harm to women (ABTA 2020). Sara Ruddick (1989) explains:

> An idealized figure of the Good Mother casts a long shadow on many actual mothers' lives. Our days include few if any perfect moments, perfect children perfectly cared for … Many mothers who live in the Good Mother's shadow, knowing they have been angry or resentful and remembering episodes of violence and neglect, come to feel their lives are filled with shameful secrets. (p. 31)

Furthermore, Luce Irigaray (1993) maintains, as follows:

> Our Tradition presents and represents the radiant glory of the mother, but rarely shows us as a fulfilled woman. And it forces us to make murderous choices: either mother

> (given that a boy child is what makes us truly mothers) or woman (prostitute and property of the male). (p. 63)

Recent research has linked the perceived inability to meet parenting expectations with negative mental health outcomes for mothers (Gross & Marcussen 2017). In Australia, around three in every twenty women (16 per cent) experience depression in the first twelve months of their child's life (Beyond Blue Ltd n.d.). The model of motherhood conveyed in magisterial ecclesiology and Mariology is not only unhelpful but could be harmful to the well-being of Catholic women.

Magisterial teaching assigns Mary with perpetual virginity and instructs that this does not diminish with the birth of Jesus (CCC, para. 496-500). This doctrine focuses only on Mary's purity and disparages actual women who live embodied sexual lives, menstruate, and shed blood in childbirth. Marcella Althaus-Reid (2002) maintains:

> [where] the femininity of the Virgin Mary is consolidated every day by a theological citational process which gives human coherence to Mary, a humanoid symbol … an artefact: a supposed woman who does not have a recognisable sexual performance is made into a sexual code … Young boys in the church may be expected to grow faithful as Abraham or repentant as King David. They could be stubborn fiery characters like Peter, but as "Peters" they will be understood and corrected in their congregations. Yet, no young woman is supposed to get pregnant by God or at least to have that historical possibility as a second coming of God in history. No young girl thinks "perhaps if I am humble enough God will have sex with me". (p. 53-4)

Althaus-Reid (2002) observes that it 'may seem ridiculous to speculate in these terms' (p. 55). Yet, the fact that all women are measured against impossible paradigms invites such dramatic irony.

The incidence of sexual violence and emotional abuse against women by intimate partners is significantly higher than the incidents against men (ABS 2017c). Over fifty per cent of women in Australia have been sexually harassed in their lifetime (ABS 2017c).

The centrality of Mary's sexual availability to humanity's redemption is problematic and potentially detrimental for women in situations whereby they are without sexual agency. The 'construal of Mary as obedient handmaid legitimates the idea that women's virtue lies in being receptively obedient to the authority of males, be they divine or human, God, fathers, husband or priests' (Johnson 2006, p. 26). In addition, the magisterial teaching that states that women must place 'themselves at the service of others in their everyday lives' (LW, para. 12) in order to 'fulfil their deepest vocation' (LW, para. 12) increases the risk for vulnerable women. The exaltation of disembodied motherhood and sexuality in magisterial ecclesiology and Mariology negates the experiences of women and perpetuates *kyriarchal* systems of power and oppression in Catholicism, including the misrepresentation of male, clerical authority. Often referred to as clericalism, the distortion of clerical authority in Catholicism stems from the theological belief that Catholic clergy are ontologically different and closer to God than the laity (RCIRCSA 2017b).

4.11 Male normativity and hierarchical-clerical power

Clericalism serves to construct a patriarchal system of relationships that reinforce dependency, ignorance, and underdevelopment between an all-knowing and all-powerful husband-father-cleric and the passive feminine wife-child-laity (Radford Ruether 2005). Thomas Plante (2020) explains it in the following way:

> Clericalism reinforces that ordained clerics in the Catholic Church are unique, special, and closer to God than non-clerics. Clerics promise not to marry or have any sexual relationships or experiences with anyone, and even masturbation and pornography use are forbidden. Clerics often maintain or project an idealized image … Their special status, attire, and role in the Church encourages and reinforces clericalism … Typically, laypersons are encouraged to treat clerics with a great deal of respect, deference, and even awe. (p. 218)

Clericalism is built on and sustained by a magisterial ecclesiology that locates Mary as an idealised and submissive archetype for the feminine laity in opposition to an all-powerful ordained male clerical caste.

In official Catholicism, women are recognised as equal to men yet not worthy of elevated ecclesiastical roles. Only men can be called to God through the sacrament of holy orders (CCC, para. 1142; Helman 2012). Female authority can only be exercised within the Catholic Church through the performance of 'essentially feminine roles as wives, mothers and virgins' (Watson 1996, p. 35). Marcella Althaus-Reid (2000) affirms:

> Theologies are never sexually neutral. The Roman Catholic Church's theology is a heavily sexual theology, obsessed with the regulation and control of sexual performances, roles and behaviour patterns of people … gendered roles are not an extra element but a constitutive one of an understanding of being church. (pp. 2-7)

Even though biblical texts confirm all human beings are created in the image and likeness of God (Galatians 3:27-28; Genesis 1:26-28; Johnson 2002a), magisterial traditions privilege men over women in status and language (Johnson 2002a). Masculine pronouns for God are used exclusively and without question in official liturgies and magisterial documents. The catechism states: 'We ought therefore to recall that God transcends the human distinction between the sexes. *He* is neither man nor woman: *he* is God' (CCC, para. 239; my emphasis). Addressing God who is absolutely transcendent is infinitely difficult (Aquinas 1989, vol. 3, no. 12, p. 26). Indeed, 'we are only able to speak about God in terms of our human experience, but we must remember that ultimately we are speaking of a profound an incomprehensible mystery' (Beattie 2017, p. 62). All words used to reference God are ultimately analogous and metaphorical: 'they have no inherent finality, no ultimate truth, no unalterable relevance. They are tools – linguistic conventions' (Gross 1992, p. 169).

The repetitive use of the designations he, him, Lord, and Father in catechism and Catholic liturgy reinforces the maleness of God and supresses other imagery of the triune God, including God as woman and mother (Deuteronomy 32:11-12, 32:18; Genesis 1:27; Hosea 11:3-4, 13:8; Isaiah 66:13, 49:15, 42:14; Luke 13:34; Luke 15:8-10; Matthew 23:37; Psalm 123:2-3; Psalm 131:2). The prioritising of male pronouns in speech about God functions with the implication that women are unable to represent God (Johnson 2002b; Marquis 2021). Speech acts are performative and male-centred language acts as regulatory discourse reinforcing women's subordination (Butler 2018). Over time, language about God is internalised and becomes an unconscious part of a pervasive system of oppression that normalises masculinity and marks women less than worthy (Johnson 2002a, 2002b; Marquis 2021).

4.12 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have explored the use of imagery and language in post-conciliar magisterial ecclesiology and the dualistic sex/gender framework it produces. I argued that the magisterium's elevation of Mary in a problematic sexualised ecclesiology establishes hierarchical-clerical power and constructs an ecclesiology that situates the dignity and salvation of women in their compliance to gendered roles and responsibilities that affirm their receptive and subordinate position in Church life. I made the case that although women have reclaimed aspects of Mariology and Marian piety, the gendered and sexual paradigms of virgin, mother, and bride create serious difficulties for Catholic women. Indeed, the adoration of disembodied childbirth, motherhood, and sexuality, which explicitly links spiritual rewards to *kyriarchal* gender obligations, means the diversity and reality of women's lives is not celebrated.

Chapter Five: Theorising power/knowledge for a feminist study of women in Catholicism

5.1 Introduction

The preceding chapters have situated Gen X women in Australia, who identify as Catholic, within an official Catholic Church marred by clericalism and a problematic magisterial ecclesiology. I have argued that resulting from this and other *kyriarchal* discourses, a divide has grown between the secular lives and religious convictions of Gen X Catholic women. The purpose of this chapter is to theorise how theories of truth, power, and knowledge interact in and explain the formation of subjectivity and how they might be used in this feminist theological study of Gen X women in the Catholic Church in Australia.

Michel Foucault (1977, 1980, 1982, 1983, 1988a, 1988b, 1990a, 1990b, 1991, 1997a, 1997b, 1998, 1999, 2003a, 2003b, 2005, 2007a, 2007b, 2010a, 2010b, 2012, 2021) writes extensively on philosophical questions related to the nature of knowledge. His interest is in challenging what might be thought of as "natural" or preordained categories (Foucault 1977, 1980). He proposes that individual subjectivities and identities are constituted and produced in a complex network of discursive and embodied forms of power and knowledges. Foucault's (1977, 1980, 1983, 2007b) conception of how discourses intersect to constitute subjects is central to the relevance of his work for this feminist theological study. Of particular interest in this chapter is how his theories about the dynamics of discourse around truth, power, and knowledge operate in relation to the creation of Gen X Catholic women as subjects within Catholicism and contemporary society in Australia.

This chapter will begin by examining the relevance of Foucault to a study of Catholic women's identities. Here, I will discuss how Foucault conceives discourses act together to construct subjectivity. Then, in a critique of Foucault via feminist theory, I will theorise women's subjectivity beyond the realms of Foucault's limitations on sexuality and agency. Drawing together Foucault's conceptions of technologies of self and practices of freedom with Judith Butler's theory of performativity, I will propose that Gen X Catholic women's agency is both enabled and disabled as they perform and negotiate systems of power and knowledge in Catholicism. I will argue that the notion that women's subjectivity and agency is constructed from available knowledges brings with it an alternative way of examining how discursive systems within societies and institutions work to both oppress and liberate.

5.2 Catholicism as a "regime of truth"

The relevance of Foucauldian theory to a study of Catholic women is open to question. Foucault never explicitly relies on religion as a specific, fixed term or category (Jordan 2015). In a 1978 interview, he responded to negative statements about religion, faith, and church with the declaration: 'Historically, what exists is the church. Faith, what is that? Religion is a political force' (Foucault 1999, p. 107). In this pronouncement, Foucault positions his interest in the historical and cultural reality of religion, rather than in the reality of belief or faith (Carrette 2013).

Foucault's engagement with Christianity centres on mapping the discursive power/knowledge relations that shape Christian thought, practice, and identity in relation to the ancient Greek, Hellenistic, and Roman world (Foucault 2012). In his work related to Christianity, Foucault addresses how Christian discourse constitute individuals as subjects:

> (Foucault) frames Christianity both as continuous with the ancient world and as importantly inaugurating mechanisms and technologies that will come to define modern subjectivity. (Clements 2021, p. 25)

For Foucault, the subject (*le sujet*) here is not merely an alternative word for "person". Instead, the notion of an individual having subjectivity 'captures the possibility of being a certain kind of person' (Heyes 2014, p. 159) and 'is typically a contingent historical possibility rather than a universal or essential truth about human nature' (Heyes 2014, p. 159). Discourse, according to Foucault (1980), is therefore the mode in and through which society and institutions categorise and speak about desires, objects, and bodies in order to produce subjective truth. This truth, he argues, is not objective but is controlled by "regimes of truth" or the systematic and political processes and rituals that are used to bind or oblige individuals to a particular system of thought (Foucault 2012). Mark Jordan (2015) notes that for Foucault, 'Christianity is a religion or a series of religions. But so too, by analogy, is modern psychiatry' (p. 9). Foucault (2012) contends, as follows:

> Christianity actually introduced a regime of truth that is at once very singular, very new and also quite paradoxical. It is, of course, a regime of truth constituted by a body of doctrine that, [on the one hand,] depends on a permanent reference to a text, and on the other hand, refers to an institution that is also permanent, and that changes and maintains something as enigmatic as tradition. (p. 83)

The idea that Christianity is a "regime of truth", produced and sustained by the effects of power, can be problematic for Christian theologians. In the Christian scriptures, the truth is God's truth and Jesus, defined as the 'truth' (John 14:6), is deemed to be God's authentic agent. In soteriological terms, there is no access to God except through Jesus, who is not only the guide to salvation but 'is the source of life and truth' (Perkins 1990, p. 974). Thus, truth comes not through a system of obligation but through God alone (James 1:18; John 8:31-34).

Foucault's interest is in the rhetorical aspects of Christianity and his concern focuses on how bodies manifest or resist truth statements (Jordan 2015). He finds a paradox in how Christianity establishes new forms of relation to self in pursuit of truth, while at the same time claiming the self-evidence of truth in tradition (Foucault 2012). In Christianity, Foucault (2012) argues, 'acts of belief, professions of faith, confessions, and confession' (p. 94) are used not to institute or establish a pure or disembodied truth but to govern, categorise, and regulate bodies. Knowledge has both an archaeology (Foucault 2010b) and a genealogy (Foucault 1980) and, therefore, what is produced and accepted as truth is power laden.

5.3 Embodied power and subjectivity

Foucault's conception of power and truth as forces that permeate and arise throughout the whole of life informs this project's understanding of the individual and collective subjectivity of Gen X women. For Foucault (1980), power is not repressive, a top-down force, rather 'it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse' (p. 119). He explains:

> rather than looking for the single form or the central point from which all forms of power derive, either by way of consequence or development, we must begin by letting them operate in their multiplicity, their difference, their specificity, and their reversibility; we must therefore study them as relations of force that intersect, refer to one another, converge, or, on the contrary, come into conflict and strive to negate one another. (Foucault 2003b, pp. 265-6)

The type of power Foucault describes presents as a complex web or mode of interaction, where the boundaries are socially constructed and produced truths. An individual's subject position is therefore variable and changeable, always open to the dynamics of the coloniality of power expressed in various hegemonic discourses and in

everyday life. Power is not just based in a hierarchy of relations but rather is everywhere and comes from everyone (Foucault 1990a). Foucault writes, as follows:

> Power is not something that is acquired, seized, or shared, something that one holds on to or allows to slip away; power is exercised from innumerable points, in the interplay of nonegalitarian and mobile relations. (Foucault 1990a, p. 94)

This suggests that 'power is omnipresent, that is, power can be found in all social interactions' (Lynch 2014, p. 15). Indeed, Foucault's account places the power relations that impact Gen X women at every level of society, operating both institutionally and individually.

Foucault (1980) expounds 'that power is "always already there," that one is never "outside" it' (p. 141). This, he asserts, does not mean that power is oppressive or a "trap", rather power is 'co-extensive with the social body' (Foucault 1980, p. 142). Both interwoven and revealed by body knowledge, power is present for Gen X Catholic women in all conditioning relations. Foucault (1977) notes:

> Power produces knowledge … Power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations. (p. 27)

For Foucault (1977, 1980), power and knowledge interact to generate epistemological possibilities, which in turn produce and reshape discursive power-relations. Yet, the dynamics of power and knowledge regulate normative and dominant discourses that determine who can speak and what counts as true (Foucault 1977, 1980). In official Catholicism, theological and ecclesial discourses are set by the magisterium to regulate how knowledge and bodies are produced; they attempt to determine the order of knowledge: who can speak and what counts as valid and true.

Foucault (1980) uses the term *subjugated knowledges* to refer to ideas, values, and events as knowledge that has been lost or marginalised either within a dominant, all-encompassing theoretical framework, or alternatively by the disdain of intellectuals who regard it as naive, primitive, or incomplete. Foucault's point is that 'even in the midst of a subjugating process an agential subject is being produced' (Kamitsuka 2007, p. 74). Accordingly, Foucault (1980) contends:

> Power must be analysed as something that circulates, or rather as something which only functions in the form of a chain. … Power is employed and exercised through a net-like organisation. And not only do individuals circulate between its threads; they are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising this power. (p. 98)

Subjugated knowledges emerge in resistance to dominant discourses, positioning individuals as simultaneously exercising and resisting power. As a result, no discourse is inherently oppressive or liberating. Catholicism is therefore a field of struggle that contains possibilities of both oppression and emancipation; the magisterium might exercise a type of sovereign power, but Gen X women can make choices about how they engage with magisterial edicts and declarations.

5.4 Biopower and governmentality

In his early work, Foucault (1990a) characterised power as sovereign; the ancient capacity to 'take life or let live' (p. 138). This was later replaced in his theoretical work with a new type of power that involved 'the administration of bodies and the calculated management of life' (Foucault 1990a, p. 40). In contrast to the negative and repressive nature of sovereign power, this type of force is normalising and disciplinary (Foucault 2003b). Foucault (2007a) proposes that after the sixteenth century, the question of "how to govern" had become increasingly important. The need for disciplines or methods to control populations were progressively more central to the project of governing. To

explain this, Foucault (2007a) coined the term *governmentality* to mean three things: (1) the ensemble formed by 'institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, calculations, and tactics' (p. 108) through which the policing and management of a population is possible; (2) the type of power that is called "government" that led to the development of certain apparatuses and to the development of knowledge; and (3) the result of the process by which judicial forms of sovereignty or the state manage the population. An *apparatus* is the heterogeneous network of strategies and practices in which the distribution of power and knowledge is located (Foucault 1980). It is a diverse ensemble of 'discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions that contribute to a diffuse matrix of power relations' (Foucault 1980, pp. 194-5). The origins of governmentality can be found in Foucault's examination of the practice of confession in early Christianity.

In his rhetorical analysis of early Christianity, Foucault (1999; 2005) notes the self-transformation that took place during conversion (*metanoia*), compelled both as a break or upheaval of self and a continuing obligation to reveal self-truth. The requirement to tell the truth about oneself was linked to self-sacrifice and subordination and was made permanent in a series of doctrinal obligations and the practice of confession (Foucault 1999). Foucault (1983) argues that through these Christian practices of self-relation, a power dynamic develops, which he names *pastoral power*. In the early Christian context, pastoral power is salvation orientated; it is both an offering to God and individualising; 'it is co extensive and continuous with life; it is linked to the production of the truth - the truth of the individual himself' (Foucault 1983, p. 214). Foucault (1983) claims that the modern state inherits, reproduces, and reconceives pastoral power. Herein, salvation takes on new meanings related to assurances of safety and well-being, and political and pastoral

power relations are linked in the government of populations (Foucault 1983). This, Foucault (1983) contends, marks the beginning of the use of *bio-power* or the normalisation of society through discipline and regulation. The notions of governmentality, pastoral power, and bio-power are key in understanding how Gen X women obtain subjectivity in Catholicism.

5.5 The production of docile bodies and the monstrous

For the purposes of this thesis, I contend that for Gen X women, Catholicism is a regime of truth, and the official Catholic Church and its magisterium are an apparatus of governmentality. Bio-power gives account as to how discourses of power, truth, and knowledge function to create subjectivity for Gen X women in Catholicism through and within a capillary of relations that are both strategic and normative. As a diffused network of relations, bio-power is positioned within, on, and through the body as the object and target of power (Foucault 1977). The embodiment of bio-power places the materiality of power in the innate internalisation of permanent visibility or exposure (Foucault 1977). The exemplar of modern bio-power is the panoptical design of a modern prison, where prisoner behaviour and production are controlled, constrained, and coerced by a naturalised mechanism of supervision or being constantly watched (Foucault 2010a). Bio-power is automated and individualised in the combination of two technologies of power or structures of control:

> One technique is disciplinary; it centers on the body, produces individualizing effects, and manipulates the body as a source of forces that have to be rendered both useful and docile. And we also have a second technology of power which is centered not upon the body but upon life: a technology which brings together the mass characteristic of a population … to establish a sort of homeostasis, not by training individuals, but by achieving an overall equilibrium. (Foucault 2003b, p. 249)

These disciplinary, regulatory, and normalising technologies, which are not mutually exclusive, are the mechanisms by which apparatuses colonise power to regulate individuals, populations, and social relations, producing docile bodies, monsters, and subjected individuals (Foucault 2003b). Foucault (2007a) contends that within populations there is a prescriptive *norm* that becomes the 'determination and identification of normal' (p. 57). Foucault (2007a) argues:

> Disciplinary normalisation consists first of all in positing a model, an optimal model that is constructed in terms of a certain result, and the operation of disciplinary normalisation consists in trying to get people, movements, and actions to conform to this model, the normal being precisely that which can conform to this norm, and the abnormal that which is incapable of conforming to the norm. (p. 57)

The norm facilitates the capacity of bio-power to create within an apparatus normalised, disciplined subjects as docile bodies. Foucault argues, as follows:

> The norm is not simply and not even a principle of intelligibility; it is an element on the basis of which a certain power is founded and legitimized … the norm brings with it a principle of both qualification and correction … it is always linked to a positive technique of intervention and transformation. (Foucault 2003a, p. 50)

Foucault (2003a) suggests that the antithesis of normal is *abnormal*. Dianna Taylor (2010) claims:

> Whereas the norm establishes what is normal, techniques of normalization function to make normal, and thus to distinguish the normal from the abnormal. They intervene within both individual bodies and populations in order to establish and bring into conformity with particular social norms. This is the case with gender, where subjects are divided into two mutually exclusive groups, the appropriate, pre-determined behaviours of which these subjects are encouraged to perform over and over again. Through such intervention, techniques of normalization perpetuate the power relations the norm founds and legitimizes. (p. 128)

Abnormal individuals or those who sit outside the norm and violate the laws of society, nature, or religion are named by Foucault (2003a) as *human monsters*. The

monster is a heterogeneous materiality, a technique of bio-power, that despite being discursively constructed as monstrous sits outside and undermines the network of power and knowledges that constructs it. The power and capacity of the "abnormal" – the "monster" – lies in its very existence outside the norm. The monster is a magnifying model of the impossible. In its actuality and existence, the monster brings the risk and promise of its existence (Foucault 2003a).

As a regime of governmentality, the official Catholic Church and its magisterium prescribe norms through a gendered, regulatory set of doctrines, beliefs, and rituals. The enactment of these norms produces docile bodies, monsters, and subjected individuals. A process of self-regulation and self-scrutiny monitors what is normal and abnormal and who might be understood as monstrous. This does not mean Catholic adherents, including Gen X women, are without power or ensnared. Rather, within a regime of governmentality, regulatory norms set limits and boundaries for self-understanding, which intrinsically reward compliance.

5.6 Feminism, the body and Foucault

The analysis of social practices and institutions carried out by Foucault (1977, 1980, 1988a, 1990a, 1990b, 1997b, 2003a, 2003b, 2005, 2007a, 2010a, 2010b, 2012, 2021) gives attention to the dynamics of embodied power and its subjects. Foucault's analysis of the human body as the centre of the struggle of power can inform an understanding of how Gen X women's identities are both disavowed and sustained by discourse. Scholarship associated with women's bodies and identities is, however, typically associated with feminism (Dillon 2018). Foucault cannot be considered a feminist; his work is heavily criticised by feminist scholarship for its male standpoint and unapologetic disregard for the subjectivity of the lived, embodied experiences of women.

In his conception of human reality, Foucault describes sexuality as an effect of the interplay between constructed socio-historical and cultural practices and largely ignores sexual difference (Jantzen 1995b). In his analysis of gender, Foucault maintains that the sexual body is discursively constructed within and through a 'highly regulated network of pleasures and bodily exchanges, produced through prohibitions and sanctions' (Butler 1996, p. 66). He explains:

> what I want to make apparent is precisely that the object "sexuality" is in reality an instrument formed a long while ago, and which has constituted a centuries-long apparatus of subjection. (Foucault 1980, p. 219)

At a fundamental level, the notion of the body and biological difference is central to any feminist analysis. Indeed, feminist theologians have asserted that where the only sanctioned sex has been male, women's inferiority is legitimised by claims to certain kinds of biology (Jordan 1999, 2000; Schüssler Fiorenza 1996, 2016). Foucault occupies an exclusively male standpoint and places sex as a necessary precondition for human intelligibility without considering that masculinity and femininity are not similarly constructed (Butler 1996). While most feminists agree that oppression does not derive from bodies or sex in a straightforward way and that there is no such thing as a naturalised or unifying "female experience", in ignoring a female standpoint, Foucault conveys the understanding that power subjugates equally (Pritsch 2004). Sandra Lee Bartky (1990) maintains:

> Foucault treats the body as if it were one, as if the bodily experiences of men and women did not differ and as if men and women bore the same relationship to characteristic institutions of modern life. Where is the account of the disciplinary practices that engender the "docile bodies" of women, bodies more docile than the bodies of men? ... To overlook the forms of subjection that engender the feminine body is to perpetuate the silence and powerlessness of those upon whom those disciplines have been imposed. Hence, even though a liberatory note is sounded in Foucault's critique of power, his

> analysis as a whole reproduces that sexism which is endemic throughout Western political theory. (p. 65)

Foucault's deconstruction of gender as a source of difference disrupts feminism's understanding of the subordination of women as a source of knowledge/power (Ramazanoglu 1993).

Many feminists argue that effective resistance to women's subordination and oppression entails assertion of the active agency and therefore subjectivity of women (Taylor 2013). Taylor (2013) explains, as follows:

> insofar as Foucault views subjectivity as a mode of constituting, understanding, and relating to ourselves that implicates us in normalizing relations of power, he is considered to undermine the necessary vehicle through which positive social transformation may occur. (p. 89)

Foucault's apparent reduction of individuals to passive or docile bodies is challenging for a feminist analysis as it gives no account of how individuals might act independently and autonomously despite social, political, and institutional constraints. Yet, his proposal that nothing can be simply accepted, even those categories, principles, and concepts that appear necessary to making sense of the world, opens possibilities for developing alternate modes of thought and existence (Taylor 2009). As such, Foucault's scholarship is useful to a feminist analysis.

Feminists have found useful tools in Foucault's deconstruction of discourse (Heyes 2013). Taylor (2010) draws upon Foucault's conception of bio-power to argue that gender is a normalising regime, the violation of which by women amounts to a disruption of ostensibly natural female behaviour. In her study, she shows that even when women violate the laws of society, their transgression hinges on their defilement of standards of femininity rather than any legal decree, thus demonstrating the normalising function of gender (Taylor 2010). In a study of women and Catholic confessional

practices, Elizabeth Jordan (1999, 2000) draws on the work of Foucault to conclude that while the technology of Catholic confession sought to 'produce women "normalised" to the requirements of the dominant patriarchal culture' (p. 309), it instead stirred in many women 'the impulse towards affirmative self-definition and positive moral growth' (p. 309).

5.7 Technologies of self

Even though Foucault's later articulations of power relations permit a more dynamic understanding of the production of subjectivities, Foucault still occupies an exclusively male standpoint and disregards women as ethical exemplars in the texts he draws on (Clements 2021). Yet, potential for freedom of choice and self-definition is explored by Foucault in his last four lecture courses delivered at the *Collège de France* and in some of his lectures and interviews from the same period (Foucault 1983; 1988a, 1991, 1997a, 1997b, 2003a, 2003b, 2005, 2007a, 2010a, 2010b, 2012, 2021). Interpreted as a whole, these works explore the fundamental problems associated with subjectivity and introduce the possibility that alternative modes of self-constitution, self-understanding, and self-relation can be established and undertaken (Taylor 2013). Indeed, Niki Kasumi Clements (2021) observes:

> Foucault's methodological approaches and theoretical constructions reflect the status of critical discourses in the early 1980s, boldly exposing the structural violence of medicalization, moralization, racialization, and criminalization even as he was killed by related mechanisms through another public health disaster. (p. 30)

In what would be his final works, Foucault reformulated his understanding of how power and resistance operate in the creation of subjectivities and the governance of people.[8] He came to see that the entirety of his work was organised around 'the

[8] The extent to which this later work is a new conception or reformulation of his earlier understanding of

constitution of human beings as subjects, on the one hand, and the struggle to extricate their capacities from increasingly rigid forms of power relations, on the other' (Thompson 2003, p. 113). He pursues what he describes as 'the different ways in our culture that humans develop knowledge of themselves' (Foucault 1988a, p. 17). Given the failure of modern subjectivity to counter the tendencies for obedience and self-renunciation it inherited from pastoral power, Foucault (1991) explores other methods of self-relation that remove the necessity for sacrifice of self. He contends, as follows:

> I think that one of the great problems with Western culture has been to find the possibility of founding the hermeneutics of the self not, as was the case in early Christianity, on the sacrifice of the self but, on the contrary, on a positive, on the theoretical and practical, emergence of the self. (Foucault 1991, p. 180)

Foucault develops the expression *technologies of self* to describe the concept that individual subjectivity or "free choice" is a by-product of both governmentality and a person's self-reaffirming relationship with power.

The notion of technologies of self as an alternative way of constituting, understanding, and relating to oneself positions the actions of Gen X women in Catholicism as part of a grid of power and knowledge that allows for self-determination. Foucault (1988a) argues that in all societies we find technologies of self, which:

> permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection or immortality. (p. 18)

He contends that when analysing the creation of a subject, both technologies of domination and technologies of self and the interaction between these two types of techniques must be taken into account. Thus, when examining the subjectivity of Gen X

power and government is highly contested (Vintges 2012).

women in Catholicism, the lived experiences and bodily practices of women must be considered alongside the prescriptive discourse of the official Catholic Church and its magisterium. What is required, Foucault (2007b) asserts, is an account that focusses on the following:

> the points where the technologies of domination of individuals over one another overlap processes by which the individual acts on himself. And conversely, the points where the techniques of self are integrated into structures of coercion or domination. (p. 154)

Thus, he explains that in modern culture:

> [governmentality] is not a way to force people to do what the governor wants; it is always a versatile equilibrium, with complementarity and conflicts between techniques which impose coercion and processes through which the self is constructed or modified by himself. (Foucault 2007b, p. 154)

In his later work, Foucault uses the term technologies of self to conceptualise and provide a link between the wider discourses and apparatus through which governmentality is achieved and the manner by which individuals shape their self-understanding through practices concerned with developing a concept of self. These practices are 'an exercise of the self on the self by which one attempts to develop and transform oneself, and to attain to a certain mode of being' (Foucault 1997b, p. 282).

The practices of self through which Gen X women in Catholicism achieve new forms of subjectivity are not random and are not produced in a discursive vacuum; they are both tied to and limited by the wider social-historical moment and the discourses and material practices available. Foucault (1997b) notes that technologies of self:

> [are] the way in which the subject constitutes himself in an active fashion, by the practices of self, these practices are nevertheless not something that the individual invents by himself … they are patterns that he finds in his culture and which are proposed, suggested and imposed on him by his culture, his society and his social group. (p. 291)

New subjectivities are produced through both the practices of self and discourses that support them (Evans & Riley 2014). Foucault (1990b) develops the term: *mode of subjection* to name 'the way in which the individual establishes his relation to the rule and recognizes himself obliged to put it into practice' (p. 27). Modes of subjection are related to the various processes and patterns of conduct or *moralities* individuals negotiate as they take up different positions in relation to the mechanisms of governmentality. Foucault (1990b) asserts moralities are of two types: code-orientated and ethics-orientated. Code-orientated moralities are 'a quasi-juridical form, where the ethical subject refers his conduct to a law, or set of laws' (Foucault 1990b, p. 29). Ethics-orientated moralities are not reducible to law but are associated with an individual's relationship to self in connection to a moral precept or "mode of being" towards a moral goal (Foucault 1990b). Code-orientated and ethics-orientated moralities intersect with, 'at different times, juxtapositions, rivalries and conflicts, and compromises' (Foucault 1990b, p. 30) establishing capabilities to act and think unexpectedly and beyond any dichotomised notion of identity or agency. Bio-power and practices of self therefore act together as a nexus of knowledge and power to produce a Gen X Catholic woman as a subject who lives, acts, and interprets in terms of normalisation, self-interpretation, and self-expression.

5.8 Agency in self-determination

From a feminist perspective, the process of technologies of self is an important shift in Foucault's work as it presents a method for analysing the relationship between the Gen X women, and culture and subjectivity in Catholicism, in a way that is not reductive, deterministic, or conspiratorial, but rather juxtaposes work on the self with a broad appreciation of power. There have been several feminist attempts to use the notion of

technologies of self to explain how women caught up in disciplinary and normalising networks of knowledge and power are able to achieve agency (Evans & Riley 2014; Gill & Organd 2015; McPhillips 2006; Taylor 2013, 2018; Vintges 2012). Agency here, however, does not infer liberation from disciplining and normalising discourses, but instead implies a process of self-knowledge and self-determination facilitated by technologies and practices of self.

Foucault (1997b) is suspicious of claims of complete or absolute freedom and liberation; he contends 'liberation paves the way for new power relationships, which must be controlled by practices of freedom' (pp. 283-4). Foucault's apparent dismissal of the idea of complete liberation could be problematic for feminism. As a socio-political movement and practice, feminism is motivated by the vision of a world liberated from dehumanising domination (Schüssler Fiorenza 2016). Foucault (1997b) describes the practice of care of the self as a sort of conversion of power or 'a way of limiting and controlling power' (p. 288). The power to constitute oneself ultimately can loosen or tighten the grip of dominant and normalising discourses of truth and power. For instance, Nancy Fraser (2005) draws on the notion of technologies of self to explain the grip of neoliberal evangelical discourses on women in the US.

Taylor (2013) argues that Foucault's issue is not with freedom itself but with the tendency of modern cultures to take liberation as the sum total of freedom. She maintains that in an interview in 1980, Foucault identifies three practices which together 'can be seen as comprising freedom in a broad sense' (Taylor 2013, p. 93). Foucault (1988b) lists the three practices of freedom, as follows:

> (1) the refusal to accept as self-evident the things that are proposed to us; (2) the need to analyze and to know, since we can accomplish nothing without reflection and understanding – this the principle of curiosity; and (3) the principle of innovation: to seek out in our reflection those things that have never been thought or imagined. (p. 1)

Thus, for Foucault, practising freedom involves the following:

> actively navigating power relations in such a way as to provide opportunities for experimenting with multiple, diverse, and even potentially conflicting modes of living. (Taylor 2013, pp. 92-3)

So conceived, Foucault's understanding of practising freedom is characterised as a disruption of prevailing norms and values that, at the same time, encourages alternative modes of thinking and relating with both the self and the wider milieu (Taylor 2013).

5.9 Technologies of Catholicism

Foucault's notion of technologies of self provides a framework for theorising how Gen X women can achieve subjectivity and practise freedom within the apparatus of the official Catholicism. Here I develop the term *technologies of Catholicism* to account for a theoretical space in which women are able to shape their Catholic identities and *praxis*. Technologies of Catholicism account for the Catholic doctrines, practices, teachings, and operations, both lived and prescribed by the magisterium, that women perform and use on their bodies, souls, thoughts, and ways of being to produce Catholic identities. In a Foucauldian sense, technologies of Catholicism are both technologies of domination and self, and practices of freedom that act together with different modes of subjection to reproduce, disturb, and interrupt prevailing norms and values to advance different conceptions of self and identity.

Technologies of Catholicism are located within the wider discourses of subjectivity and are part of a broader cultural context and set of societal influences and practices. Therefore, while the power of the magisterial teachings to compel and constitute women as subjects is an important factor in technologies of Catholicism, Catholic women are not just part of the Catholic Church. Catholic women's subjectivities

and identities are formed by the intersections of race, class, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and nationhood (Schüssler Fiorenza 2016).

As technologies and practices of self are able to generate truths within a network of power and knowledge, individuals are able to critically reflect on the process of becoming a subject. The power to constitute self when using technologies of Catholicism enables individuals to use various modes of subjection to take up new subject positions that resonate with them. However, in the action of asserting subjectivity, Gen X women might further engage with technologies and practices of self that themselves constitute new subjectivities. While there is a possibility of freedom, new subjectivities can also inadvertently retain and assert the terms and conditions of the prevailing discursive power structure of the magisterium. Thus, implicitly disobedient self-relations, characterised by refusal, curiosity, and innovation, must be exercised to create opportunities for new possibilities and freedoms (Taylor 2013).

5.10 Developing self-reflexivity

Butler's (1996, 2011, 2014, 2015, 2018, 2020) work is useful in theorising how Gen X Catholic women might develop self-reflexivity using technologies of self and practices of freedom within the regime of truth and apparatus of Catholicism. In dialogue with Foucault and in response to essentialist formulations of womanhood, Butler developed her theory of the social construction of gendered identity. Moving beyond binary constructions of sexuality, Butler (2014, 2015, 2018) contends that rather than there being an original femininity or materiality of the body, the performance of gender identity is an imitation of an "original", which is in fact an inherently unstable socio-historical and discursive construct. To say biological sex and gender are both socially constructed and enacted, however, is not to say a body is fully constructed or that it is nothing but a

construction. Rather, what needs to be understood 'is in what sense and to what extent a body is shaped and endowed with significance by virtue of the historical framework in which it is understood and the historical discourses through which it is formed' (Butler 2015, n.p.). Critical to Butler's theory are insights drawn from Foucault. However, while Foucault theorises the opportunity for self-determination within the bounds of available discourses, Butler's work extends agency and reflexivity to alterations of discourse within available power structures (Evans & Riley 2014).

Applied to the situation of Gen X women in Catholicism, what Butler's theory challenges is the pre-discursive nature of fixed and essentialist conceptions of gender identity. There is, for Butler (2014), no material body that is not itself constituted, as gender identity is always an enactment and reproduction of normative discourses. She argues, as follows:

> To claim that discourse is formative is not to claim that it originates, causes, or exhaustively composes that which it concedes; rather, it is to claim that there is no reference to a pure body which is not at the same time a further formation of that body. In this sense, the linguistic capacity to refer to sexed bodies is not denied, but the very meaning of "referentiality" is altered. In philosophical terms, the constative claim is always to some degree performative. (Butler 2014, p. 10)

Accordingly, gender identities are performed and socially constructed by speech-acts, learned bodily enactments, and discursive practices. This undermines the magisterium's notion of gender and sexuality as fixed, ontological, and absolute.

Butler (2014) calls *performativity* the 'reiterative and citational practice by which discourse produces what it names' (p. 2). Performativity is a series of "acts" that reiterate a norm or set of norms, where a norm, understood in a Foucauldian sense, takes hold to the extent that it is cited. Norms are able to 'compel a citation because they establish guidelines for what is socially acceptable and workable' (Armour & St. Ville 2006, p. 4).

The power of a norm is itself citational and it is in reiteration that a norm is consolidated. Without reiteration, a norm loses its meaning and status as an identifier. Butler (2014) uses the term *citationality* to name the repetitive process of performativity through which identity is acquired. Citationality, however, is not the "act" itself but the power that the assumption of a norm compels, the power of a discourse to produce that to which it refers. Thus, it is not through the magisterium's prescription of gendered and regulatory norms, but in and through the citation and performance of these same norms, that women enact their identities and become gendered subjects of Catholicism.

For Butler, the materialisation of gender identities is innately unstable and occurs through a process where sex is both produced and destabilised in the course of reiteration (Butler 2014). This is because the norms or laws that regulate gender are never exact but instead are 'nothing other than a parody of the idea of the natural and the original' (Butler 2011, p. 43). Butler (2011) asserts the following:

> Although the gender meanings taken up in these parodic styles are clearly part of hegemonic, misogynist culture, they are nevertheless denaturalized and mobilized through their parodic recontextualization. As imitations which effectively displace the meaning of the original, they imitate the myth of originality itself. In the place of an original identification which serves as a determining cause, gender identity might be reconceived as a personal/cultural history of received meanings subject to a set of imitative practices which refer laterally to other imitations and which, jointly, construct the illusion of a primary and interior gendered self or parody the mechanism of that construction. (p. 189)

Parody refers to the repetition of citational practices that are necessary in order to be understood and, more importantly, recognised as one gender or another. The implication is that the enactments of gendered identities in Catholicism are always in negotiation with culture, power, and discourse. Authoritarian discourses, such as those established by the official Catholic Church, however, despite their normative aim, do not

always succeed in containing the effects they bring into play. Butler (2018) explains that in the course of the reproduction of gendered norms:

> some weakness in the norm is revealed, or another set of cultural conventions intervenes to produce confusion or conflict within a field of norms, or, in the midst of an enactment, another desire starts to govern, and forms of resistance develop, something new occurs, not precisely what was planned. (p. 31)

While the aim of a regulatory discourse in Catholicism is a certain type of gender enactment or performance of identity, an individual's lived reality is not always in compliance or conformity with gendered norms:

> We see that the animating aims of a regulatory discourse, as it is enacted bodily, give rise to consequences that are not always foreseen, making room for ways of living gender that challenge prevailing norms of recognition. (Butler 2018, p. 31)

Thus, performativity is located in a type of inadvertent agency that can give rise to the emergence of new subjectivities that are not outside culture, power, and discourse but have emerged from their terms and unforeseen deviations (Butler 2018).

Gender performativity does not just characterise speech acts and embodied behaviours, but how discourse and institutional power functions to affect, constrain, and move identities. The emergence of new subjectivities through the citation of norms brings the potential for new conceptions and understandings of self, which exist outside or challenge prevailing norms of recognition in systems of power and knowledge. While this can bring about agency, it can also mean that some people might struggle for *recognisability*, a situation that 'threatens the possibility of existing and persisting' (Butler 2018, p. 40). Indeed, the compulsory demand to inhabit certain norms or appear one way and not another, can function as a precondition to appearing at all:

> embodying the norm or norms by which one gains a recognizable status is a way of ratifying and reproducing certain norms of recognition over others, and so constraining the field of the recognizable. (Butler 2018, p. 35)

Butler (2018) explains:

> To ask how these norms are installed and normalized is the beginning of the process of not taking the norm for granted, of not failing to ask how it has been installed and enacted, and at whose expense. For those effaced or demeaned through the norm they are meant to embody, the struggle becomes an embodied one of recognizability, a public insistence on existing and mattering. (p. 37)

The struggle for recognisability opens individuals to the condition of *precarity*:

> "Precarity" designates that politically induced condition in which certain populations suffer from failing social and economic networks of support more than others, and become differentially exposed to injury, violence, and death. (Butler 2018, p. 33)

Precarity is often linked to those who do not live gender norms in intelligible ways (Butler 2018). It can be, 'depending on the circumstance, both terrifying and exhilarating' (Butler 2018, p. 40). Butler's notion of recognisability is important in understanding how and why Gen X women engage in and challenge gendered and other norms in Catholicism.

Drawing together Foucault's notion of technologies of self and practices of freedom with Butler's ideas of performativity makes it possible for the agency of Gen X Catholic women to be reconceptualised as a more complex action than choosing one discourse over another. For instance, in enacting technologies of Catholicism, Gen X women are able to both produce and subvert recognisability. Power is not simply imposed. Power produces 'a subject whose agency is constituted in the process of interacting performatively with power/knowledge' (Kamitsuka 2007, p. 73). Through the complex interaction of available discourses, agency and subjectivity are both produced and subverted. Gen X women's agency is both enabled and disabled as they enact

Catholic culture. Through the process of technologies of Catholicism and covertly noncompliant self-relations characterised by refusal, curiosity, and innovation, come new possibilities and opportunities for self-expression. In taking up a subject position, Gen X women are able to negotiate recognisability and precarity and engage in technologies and practices of self and practices of freedom to not just affirm and reproduce, but also subversively parody the norms of Catholic womanhood.

5.11 Conclusion

In this chapter, I examined how Foucault's theories of truth, power, and knowledge interact in and explain the formation of subjectivity. I explored how his theories might be used in this feminist theological study of Gen X women to interrogate and deconstruct *kyriarchal* structures in Catholicism. Drawing on Foucault's notion of technologies of self, I developed the term *technologies of Catholicism* to describe the theoretical space in which women shape their Catholic identities and *praxis.* I proposed that technologies of Catholicism, drawn together with Butler's theory of performativity, produce a theoretical framework to: (1) critique and draw attention to existing norms and values that constitute Gen X women's subjectivity in Catholicism; (2) introduce opportunities for participating in and expanding the practice of freedom; and (3) extend Gen X women's self-reflexivity and agency to alterations of discourses within Catholicism that challenge conceptions of recognisability.

Chapter Six: Methodology and research design

6.1 Introduction

Having established, in the previous chapter, a theoretical basis through which the agency and subjectivity of Gen X women in Catholicism is able to be interrogated and deconstructed, this chapter will introduce this thesis' methodological approach and set out its research design. I begin this chapter by surveying existing research on Gen X women in Catholicism, through which I establish a significant research gap. I then introduce the concept of a Foucauldian genealogy as a methodological base for this thesis. Linking the philosophical underpinnings of genealogy to this study, I then argue that the genealogical methodology provides a framework analysis of the narratives of Gen X women. Finally, I outline the research design of this thesis and introduce the cohort of Gen X women who participated in this research.

6.2 Existing Australian research on Gen X women's Catholic identities

In Chapters Two and Three, I established the movement of Gen X women away from official, institutional Catholic ritual practices. Despite this, and the challenge this presents the official Catholic Church, very little research has been undertaken that gives insight into the identities and participation of Gen X women in Catholicism who do not attend Mass (McEwan 2018; McEwan & McPhillips 2017). Existing research into Gen X Catholics in Australia tends to overlook reflexivity in the formation of Catholic identities and uses a measure of Catholic identity based solely on church participation or compliance to doctrine endorsed and prescribed by the magisterium (Dixon 2004; McKinley & Webber 2012; Rymarz 2004, 2007a).

In order to assess what aspects of identity assist in maintaining a high level of commitment to Catholicism, Diana McKinley and Ruth Webber (2012) interviewed a committed group of Gen X and Gen Y Catholics. They argue that the theology, doctrine, and liturgical rites that are prescribed by the magisterium and Catholic tradition form a Catholic identity (McKinley & Webber 2012). Accordingly, their study participants are chosen because of their regular involvement in public and private Catholic practice and thus represented an "atypical" group of Gen X Catholics (McKinley & Webber 2012). The group note that being Catholic is "intrinsic" to their identity, with their Catholic faith underpinning all aspects of how they conduct their lives (McKinley & Webber 2012). They find meaning in Mass attendance and sacramental participation and noted a strong connection to magisterial Catholicism (McKinley & Webber 2012). The McKinley and Webber (2012) study uses a framework of Catholic identity that privileges declarations of magisterial authority and limits what constitutes proper or normative Catholic practice. It considers only Catholics who are active and visible in church communities, and offers no analysis of gendered identities.

Other research on the beliefs, practices, and identities of Gen X Catholics in Australia also uses church participation and institutional involvement as a criterion of Catholic identity (Dixon 2004; Rymarz 2004). In his research, Robert Dixon (2004) focuses only on Mass attendees and uses (now dated) quantitative data from the 2001 NCLS and 2001 Australian census to document key Gen X cohort characteristics. Dixon's approach is limited by its use of discrete quantitative categories to measure participation and belief and its failure to account for Gen X Catholics who are not Mass attendees. It is incomplete in its analysis of gender. Richard Rymarz's (2004) research details and assesses the formative influences of Gen X Catholics in order to understand their lack of Mass attendance and low levels of adherence to magisterial doctrine and teaching.

Proposing four subgroups of Gen X Catholics, Rymarz (2004) links Catholic identity to a connection with Church life, a connection he argues is only established when a census-identifying Catholic either attends Mass or has an association with Catholic schools. While Rymarz (2004) does give some consideration to Gen X Catholics who are not participating in Church life, he provides no analysis of gender.

In 2018, I published a cross-generational study of the private and public practices, orthodoxy, and religious salience of Catholic church-attending women in Australia using quantitative analysis of data collected in the 2006, 2011, and 2016 NCLS (McEwan 2018). Mass attendees from Gen X were included as a specific cohort. The study found a notable generational decline in the religiosity of female, Catholic, Mass attendees that could only be in part explained by generational difference (McEwan 2018). It found that multiculturalism, life stage, and the loss of less orthodox attendees also influenced the patterns of religiosity between cohorts (McEwan 2018). While this study did address gender, it included only the small yet significant cohort of women who are still engaging in Catholic parish life (McEwan 2018).

When comparing the Catholic population, as a whole entity, it is generally probable that Catholic Mass attendees will be born overseas or be better educated than Catholic adherents who do not attend Mass (Dixon, Reid & Chee 2013). Census-only identifying Catholics are generally more likely to be either never married or divorced (Dixon, Reid & Chee 2013). When considering Catholics who no longer adhere to Catholic practices, such as Mass attendance, it is important to note that their Catholic identities might still hold meaning and should not be automatically considered nominal (Dillon 1999, 2018; McEwan & McPhillips 2017). Catholic women often have pluralistic expressions of belief and practice that do not always rely on the authority of the official Catholic Church (Dillon 1999, 2018; McEwan 2018; McEwan & McPhillips 2017;

McGuire 2008; Winter, Lummis & Stokes 1995). In order to develop an understanding of how Gen X women are participating in the Catholic Church in Australia and evaluate what it means to them to be Catholic, it is necessary to look beyond the official Catholic Church as the central site for data collection and analysis.

The only existing Australian research that explores the belief and practice of Gen X women in Catholicism as a specific cohort and accounts for women who are not Mass attendees is the ACBC research project on 'The Participation of Women in the Catholic Church'.[9] This research, published as *Woman and man: One in Christ Jesus* (1999) was conducted to collect data regarding the participation of women in the Catholic Church in Australia in order to establish if barriers existed that were hindering women's participation. Despite providing a narrow and now out-of-date portrait of Gen X women who identify as Catholic, this study revealed that Gen X women perceived the Catholic Church as failing to meet their needs (Macdonald et al. 1999). It cited gender issues and Catholic teaching on sexuality, contraception, and divorce as primary barriers to church-based participation (Macdonald et al. 1999). Regrettably, the group of Gen X women sampled was limited (Macdonald et al. 1999; McEwan & McPhillips 2017). Younger women, who represented Gen X in the study, were selected based on their affiliation with Catholic organisations and most were involved in Catholic parishes and organisations when surveyed (Macdonald et al. 1999). Given the overall lack of participation in Catholic culture by Gen X women, the limited sampling means that not only were Gen X women underrepresented in the project, but those interviewed might not have been representative of the broader cohort.

[9] The research project included a targeted focus group called "young women", with Gen X women represented within this cohort (Macdonald et al. 1999). No age range was specified in the report. In 1997, Gen X were aged 17-32 so could be considered "young women".

Despite the diminishment of church attendance among recent generations of Catholic women (McEwan 2018), I have shown that all existing research on the beliefs, practices, and identities of Gen X women in the Catholic Church in Australia has primarily been drawn from women who are participants in Church life and are typically Mass attendees; this is a considerable gap in research. Not all Gen X Catholic women comply fully with magisterial authority. As I showed in Chapter Two, international research shows that Catholic women use agency and life experience to construct their Catholic identities and *praxis* (Calderón Muñoz 2016; Dillon 1999, 2018; Leming 2007). In order to fully understand the relationship of Gen X women to the Catholic Church in Australia, this gap in research needs to be addressed by considering the identities of women with different levels of adherence, affiliation, and practice.

6.3 What is a Genealogy?

In his body of work, Michel Foucault uses two methodological frameworks to analyse the power dimensions of discourse. In the method he calls an "archaeology", Foucault investigates the production of discourses of truth and their correlation with 'institutions and systems of order, appropriation and exclusion' (Welch 1985, p. 19). "Genealogy" is the method and methodological approach that Foucault uses to explore events, ideas, values, and doctrines as knowledges that are discontinuous, illegitimate, or insufficiently elaborated on, within or against the claims of a particular body of theory (Foucault 2003b). Foucault (2003b) explains genealogies in the following way:

> [A genealogy] is a way of playing local, discontinuous, disqualified, or nonlegitimized knowledges off against a unitary theoretical instance that claims to be able to filter them, organize them into a hierarchy, organize them in the name of a true body of knowledge … a sort of attempt to desubjugate historical knowledges, to set them free, or in other words to enable them to oppose and struggle against the coercion of a unitary, formal, and scientific theoretical discourse. (pp. 9-10)

Foucault developed his method and methodological approach of genealogy via an analysis of crime and the penal system in *Discipline and Punishment* (1977) and the construct of sexuality in his four-volume *The History of Sexuality* (1988a, 1990a, 1990b, 2021).

Foucault (1977, 1988a, 1990a, 1990b, 2021) uses genealogy to theorise how discourses work together within a grid or network of power and knowledges. Equipped with a theory of how power/knowledge operates, he adopts a sceptical stance towards claims of theoretical and totalitarian unity, which locates power in particular social institutions or groups (Foucault 1980). For Foucault, genealogy constitutes the following:

> an attempt to give an account of the origins of a practice/institution in such a way as to explain the development of the power relationship which exists in it, and the way in which that relationship constitutes the subjects of it. (Jordan 1999, p. 305)

Using genealogy as a method and methodological approach, Foucault (1977, 1988a, 1990a, 1990b) examines the development of societies and their institutions using an assortment of analytical tools to encapsulate patterns of power and resistance over time. Genealogy, however, is not a history in any conventional sense. Indeed, Foucault (1998) dismisses the idea of history as "linear development" or the search for "origins" and, as an alternative, looks to the isolation of different points of emergence that do not conform to successive configurations of an identical meaning. Genealogy, therefore, is an attempt to examine the possibilities and events that result from discontinuities in historical "continuity". It is concerned with and allows researchers to 'establish a historical knowledge of struggles and to make use of this knowledge tactically' (Foucault 1980, p. 83).

In his various genealogical analyses, Foucault 'showed how concepts and practices that we take for granted are nevertheless not ontologically fixed but socially

constructed' (Jantzen 2001, p. 225). By illustrating that this construction is not always and everywhere the same, Foucault explicitly addresses the inherent and intrinsic relationship between resistance and domination within discourse. Foucault (1997a) observes: 'I think that resistance is part of this strategic relationship of what power consists. Resistance really always relies upon the situation against which it struggles' (p. 168). Therefore, while power/knowledge can be stabilised in institutions, there is potential for social movements outside the normal or ordinary to have an impact on the status quo (Foucault 1997a).

Foucault (1980) opposes the 'hierarchisation of knowledges and the effects intrinsic to their power' (p. 85). For instance, in *Discipline and Punishment* (1977), by locating a discontinuity between pre-modern and modern penal practices, Foucault is able to challenge the notion of continuous histories and discourses and bring into question the historical contingency of contemporary prison systems. Genealogy has the responsibility of the insurrection of subjugated knowledges against the disciplinary effects of power. Foucault (1980) explains, as follows:

> What emerges out of this is something one might call a genealogy, or rather a multiplicity of genealogical researches, a painstaking rediscovery of struggles together with the rude memory of their conflicts. And these genealogies, that are the combined product of an erudite knowledge and a popular knowledge, were not possible and could not have even been attempted except on one condition, namely that the tyranny of globalising discourse and their hierarchy and all their privileges of a theoretical avant-garde was eliminated. (p. 83)

What is at stake is the reclaiming of knowledges and what makes critique possible is the reappearance of disqualified knowledges (Foucault 2003b).

When Foucault developed his genealogical method and methodological approach, he was problematising and bringing into consciousness ideas central to the post-modern

imaginary, to be held up to scrutiny, and thus shown that they were 'the sedimentations of historical and social construction' (Jantzen 2001, p. 225). In this way, Grace Jantzen (2001, 2004) asserts, Foucault develops a method to deconstruct, critique, and reimagine the contours of present cultural and moral imaginaries. For instance, Jantzen (2001, 2004) uses a genealogy to examine the obsession with death in the western, masculinist moral imaginary and theorise a transformative, alternate, feminist imaginary of natality. Elizabeth Jordan (1999, 2000) wrote a genealogy of the Catholic sacrament of confession to challenge the idea that confession, as an institutional practice, is founded in the Christian scriptures and divinely ordained. Through an exploration of power dynamics and discontinuities, Jordan (1999, 2000) reveals that although sacramental confession has operated as a repressive technology, women have exercised the right to escape the constraints imposed by Catholicism and choose a path that is self-determined and affirming. Here, I argue that a genealogy of Gen X women in the Catholic Church in Australia will deconstruct what discourses shape women's identities and by problematising and calling into question notions of power, authority, and knowledge, to address, critique, and develop possibilities for Gen X women to chart their own futures in relation to the regime of Catholicism.

6.4 Genealogy as a methodology in a feminist theological study of Catholic women

Foucault's genealogical method and methodological approach does not specifically deal with the disciplines of religion or theology. As noted earlier, when Foucault addresses religion and theology, he does so as part of a broader system of power/knowledge shaped by history within social and cultural institutions.[10] In his inquiries, he presupposes that

[10] For an example of this, see Foucault (1983, pp. 213-5).

Christianity and indeed all religion arises from 'issues in fields of force inseparable from the rest of human history' (Jordan 2015, p. 9). What concerns Foucault is not any connection with a special realm, but rather how religion 'arranges languages and practices – teaching and rituals – to control the world and the bodies very much in it' (Jordan 2015, p. 9). As Jeremy Carrette (2000) observes, 'after Foucault, religion and theology are seen as inseparable from questions about the body and sexuality' (p. 146). Thus, Catholicism and its moral and ecclesial imaginary are situated as a set of discursive power/knowledge relations shaped by human history, culture, and gender.

Foucault's perspective, which presents church as a wholly human, sociological reality, has the potential to be problematic. As I discussed in Chapter Four, in any magisterial ecclesiological discourse, the Catholic Church is defined as a mystery or a sacrament, an arcane reality wherein the presence of God is hidden yet active. This means that Catholicism and the Catholic Church are not to be seen merely as a religion, institution, or a human or sociological society alongside other such societies, but a theological reality and a demonstration of God – present and active redemptively in the world (McBrien 2009). Since Vatican II, the magisterium has increasingly employed Mary, the mother of Jesus, as ultimate personification of the Church (Beattie 2018; Hines 1993; Lledo Gomez 2015, 2018; Luckman 2006; Sheehan 2000). Magisterial ecclesiology utilises the female images and the metaphors of virgin, mother, and bride to describe the essential nature of Mary as Church and express the dependent relationship between Christ and his Church. Here, Mariology purportedly serves to balance the sociological structure of the Church with the mystery of Church as God's redemptive action (Ratzinger 1988). In practice, although this imagery confirms the Catholic Church as essentially human, it also creates a divide between the masculine hierarchy and the feminine laity (Beattie 2018). It situates the laity, and therefore all women, as primarily

receivers, not producers of theological knowledge (Imperatori-Lee 2015). Mary presents an impossible but ideologically useful paradigm for womanhood (Monagle 2020). Henceforth, official Catholic theologies and ecclesiologies prioritise the hierarchical character of Catholicism by privileging declarations of magisterial authority and setting clear limits on what constitutes proper or normative belief, practice, and identity (CCL, canon. 750). Institutionalised discourse governing normative belief and practice circulate and are regulated by a male clerical caste who manufacture a level of orthodoxy that is understood in Church law as essential for fashioning subjectivity in Catholicism (Beaudoin & Hornbeck 2013). This problematises attempts to map the everyday practices and actions of embodied individuals to reveal any form of Catholic identities beyond what is endorsed and prescribed by the magisterium.

Feminist theologies have long noted the power of *kyriarchal* images and symbols in Catholic discourse to act as ecclesial structures of power, domination, and exclusion that shape women's practices and identities (Abraham 2019; Schüssler Fiorenza 1993, 2009, 2016; Watson 1996). The task of critical feminist theologies is to deconstruct *kyriarchal* power relations that are inscribed in religious language and scripture and undertake 'the reconstructive task of envisioning a different world, society, and religious community free from domination' (Schüssler Fiorenza 2016, p. 10). Feminist theologies have the potential to overcome the myth of objectivity, which claims that magisterial teaching and its related ecclesiologies speak for all Catholics. Feminist ecclesiologies acknowledge the multiplicity of women's lives and enable church to be 'a space where the encounter with the particular other becomes an encounter with the many faces of the divine, where human beings can become Christ-like for each other' (Knödel 1997, p. 119).

I argue that as narrative is a central feature of the Christian tradition, women's stories and *praxis* are valid sources of theological and ecclesial reflection. Christianity was founded 'on biblical narratives and on the experience of encounter with Jesus Christ' (Imperatori-Lee 2018, p. 1):

> The focal point of early Christian self-understanding was not a holy book or a cultic rite, not mystic experience and magical invocation, but a set of relationships: the experience of God's presence among one another and through one another. (Schüssler Fiorenza 2009, p. 345)

Church, the human story of God, lives on in the community of the people of God who give witness to the message of the Gospel (Schillebeeckx 1990; Schüssler Fiorenza 2009). This locates the basic loci of all ecclesiologies in the lived reality and embodied actions of the people of God. Women are and have always been part of the Catholic Church and Catholic tradition (Schüssler Fiorenza 2009, 2016; Watson 1996). Natalia Imperatori-Lee (2018) argues:

> Shared stories create community, just as memories, understood also as narratives constitute personal identity. As such, narrative lies at the cornerstone of individual and group self-understandings, and these understandings include religious identity. (p. 2)

Indeed, when women share their stories, their narratives 'give a glimpse into the truth of their lives, their subjective truth that is even beyond their own words' (Abraham 2019, p. 14).

A Foucauldian genealogy is concerned with the regimes and apparatuses whereby truth and power/knowledge are produced. It explores what kinds of conditions and processes determine which categories and ideas are included and excluded and to what effect. In Catholicism, the official Catholic Church and its magisterium are an apparatus and regime of governmentality. Herein, Catholic women are subjects of Catholicism and the gendered discourse it generates. Yet, as I have previously shown in Chapter Two, the

magisterial understanding of Catholic identity is just one of a series of constructions of Catholic identities that are implicitly linked to issues of truth, power, gender, and authority. A genealogy of Gen X women in the Catholic Church in Australia is therefore much more than a study of magisterial theology and ecclesiology and the discourses that inform it. Gen X women, as a cohort, share a collective social, historical, and cultural situation. However, women's experiences, stories, and identities are not fixed or natural but are constructed from a multitude of knowledges; they have a genealogy that can be explored.

6.5 Research design

In order to develop an understanding of how Gen X women construct and enact their Catholic identities, this thesis will investigate participants' narrative accounts of their participation in and experience of Catholicism. In a Foucauldian sense, narratives accounts are discursive practices or technologies of self through which individuals are able to make sense of themselves in relation to various systems of power/knowledge (Foucault 1997b). The narrative accounts of Gen X women are thus technologies of self and emerge in relation to the contexts in which participants find themselves. This means that they are saturated in power/knowledge relations and can be analysed as critical technologies of self-formation.

6.5.1 Method and instruments

For this thesis, the narratives of the Gen X women participants were collected, using one-to-one, informal, in-depth, semi-structured interviews. Methods that quantify a participant's religious affiliation, participation, and practice, using only discrete categories, do not always reflect the complexities and contradictions of women's identities (Ammerman 2014). By contrast, in-depth interviews are particularly helpful in

retrieving the stories and lived experiences of women to gain a depth of subjective understanding to their particular situation or set of circumstances (Hesse-Biber 2007).

In a feminist study of identity, faith, and practice, an awareness of the role played by the researcher in the interview process, in terms of power and authority, should be central in research design (Porter 2018). In this thesis, participants were invited to take part in interviews in a safe and neutral site of their choosing. To remove any sense of a hierarchical relationship between the researcher and the participant, Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber (2007) suggests:

> The idea of sharing identities and stories with one another … to increase reciprocity and rapport in the interview process, thus breaking down the notions of power and authority invested in the role of the researcher. (p. 128)

In accordance with this, interviews were conversational in tone and reflexivity was practised throughout the interview process:

> Reflexivity means taking a critical look inward and reflecting on one's own lived reality and experiences; this self-reflection or journey can be extremely helpful in the research process. (Hesse-Biber 2007, p. 129)

The practice of reflexivity ensured that, as a researcher, I was aware of any relationship or positionality that might affect the interview and allows adaptations to be made where appropriate (Morgans 2018). Interviews were directed by a set of questions (see Appendix F – *Interview questions*); however, the informal, conversational style of interviews meant that questions could be adapted to the unfolding process of the interview, with care taken not to impose ideas or beliefs on participants. During the interview participants were asked to respond to various statements from magisterial documents. These statements were chosen to stimulate discussion. Prior to and during the interview, guided by formal ethical principles, participants were reassured that they were under no obligation to answer any questions that made them feel uneasy.

6.5.2 Participants

The goal of the research project that was undertaken as part of this thesis was not to generalise about all Gen X women in Catholicism but to use a sample population's stories and experiences to illustrate the different ways that Gen X women in Australia negotiate their Catholic identities and participate in Church life. In Chapters Two and Three, I have shown that even though Gen X women in Catholicism share a common socio-historical and cultural situation and set of formative experiences there are various ways they might express their identities. A non-random sample can be used to facilitate representativeness in a unique, marginalised population (O'Leary 2010). Participants were selected from the cohort of Gen X women in Australia, using purposive, non-random sampling to support the gathering of narratives from women with different levels of adherence, practice, affiliation, and commitment.

To be included in the research project, all participants must have been born between 1 January 1965 and 31 December 1980, identify as female, be a permanent resident of Australia, and currently or previously have identified as Catholic. While there are various ways in which individuals might identify with Catholicism (Dillon 1999, 2018), this thesis draws on women's experiences, with self-identification the only criterion required to classify a woman as Catholic. It also acknowledges, 'women's experience is not a heterogeneous whole, but a diversity of interweaving and conflicting voices from women' (Berry 2018, p. 204). Therefore, while participants were chosen from three typographic groups, this was primarily to facilitate sampling of a diverse group.

Previous social research has divided Catholics into different groupings or typologies based on adherence, practice, affiliation, and commitment (Dixon 2004; Kennedy 1988; Rymarz 2004). These typologies do not acknowledge those who no longer

identify as Catholic. As a result, this research project defined its own typological groups. The groups included:

- *Engaged* Catholic women: Self-identifying Catholics who indicate that their Catholic faith and practices are an important part of their lives;
- *Disengaged* Catholic women: Self-identifying Catholics who are loosely affiliated with the Catholic tradition;
- *Disaffiliated* Catholic women: Previously self-identifying Catholics who have now ceased to identify as Catholic.

Participants who still identified as Catholic (both *engaged* and *disengaged* Catholics) were presumed to be active congregants of the Catholic Church and were recruited from geographic Catholic dioceses of Perth, Cairns, Melbourne, Maitland/Newcastle, Sydney, and Adelaide.[11] The bishops of each diocese were contacted by letter and permission was sought to conduct research among their congregants. (For a sample *Letter to bishops* see Appendix E. For *Replies from bishops* see Appendix J). These geographic Australian dioceses were chosen to provide a mix of urban, regional, and rural outlooks and a varied range of ethnic and economic backgrounds. Participants who did not identify as Catholic only had to meet the requirement of Australian residency.[12]

6.5.3 Ethical considerations

The research project that was undertaken as part of this thesis was approved by the University of Newcastle's *Human Research Ethics Committee* (HREC) on 5 March 2018, Approval No. H-2017-0205 (see Appendix K – *Human Research Ethics Committee*

[11] Participants who were congregants were sought from the Diocese of Toowoomba, but none were recruited.
[12] The process of participant selection and the seeking of permission from Bishops was informed by the requirements of The University of Newcastle's *Human Research Ethics Committee* (HREC).

approval).[13] An ethics committee is there to (1) safeguard integrity in the production of knowledge; (2) support research methods and processes that encourage responsibility regarding participants; and (3) provide some legal protections for researchers and their institution (O'Leary 2010). After HREC approval was received, sampling in each typographic group was carried out using a mix of volunteer, handpicked, and modified snowball sampling.[14] Potential participants were invited to take part in this research project using the *Project research flyer* (see Appendix A). The *Project research flyer,* which describes the project details, was distributed through personal and social media networks.[15]

All potential participants underwent an initial self-screening process where they were asked to place themselves in a typological category with the assistance of the flowchart in Figure 1 (see Appendix E – *Identification screening questions*). (To ensure that the total sample was varied, a maximum of fifteen participants were chosen from each group.) Once a potential participant expressed interest in taking part in the research, they were given a *Participant information statement* (see Appendix B) and its *attachment* (see Appendix C), which clearly set out the voluntary nature of the research and the ability to exit the research without penalty at any point. In these documents, potential participants received detailed information about the research project, the interview process, and the benefits and risks of participating. Each prospective participant was given a reasonable

[13] A variation to the HREC approval to include participants from Adelaide Archdiocese and Toowoomba Diocese was approved on 11 October 2018, Approval No. H-2017-0205 (See Appendix K – *Human Research Ethics Committee approval*).

[14] Handpicked sampling is a non-random, targeted sample where judgement is used to determine the most suitable participants (O'Leary 2010). Modified snowball sampling is a process of building a sample through referrals, which can be useful for populations that are hard to access (O'Leary 2010). (See Appendix G – *Sample snowball email*.)

[15] The Recruitment Flyer describing the project details was distributed through the social media site Facebook. Permission was sought from the administrator/moderator of the National Office for the Participation of Women Facebook page prior to the posting of any advertisement or flyer (see Appendix H *Letter to director of National Office for the Participation of Women*). It was requested that people share the link.

period of time to read and consider this information before consenting to an interview. Prior to giving consent, it was made clear to prospective participants that their identities would be protected by the use of pseudonyms, with all transcripts de-identified and no identifying information revealed without their prior consent. Thirty-six participants came forward and completed the recruitment process and a *Project consent form* (see Appendix D).

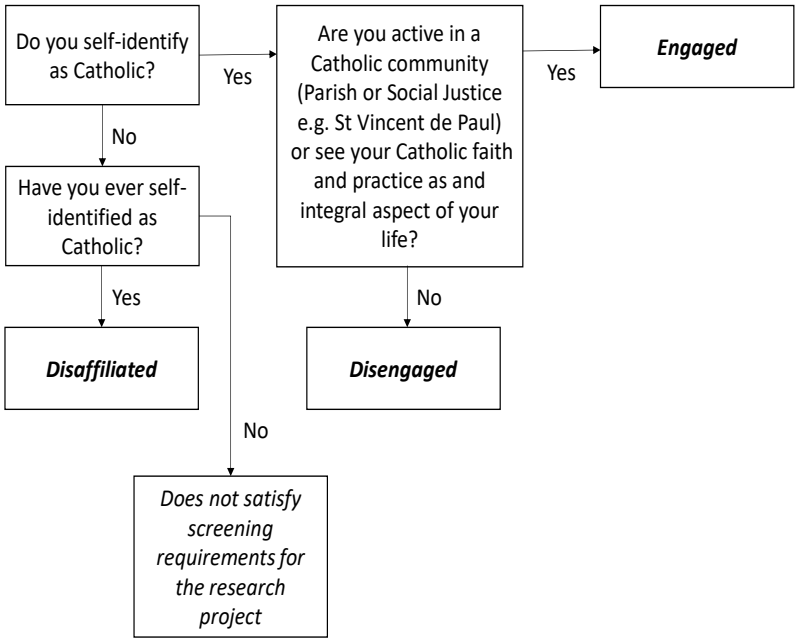


Figure 1: Self-identification flowchart for typology

6.5.4 Data analysis

The narratives of each participant were collected as data, which were subsequently analysed and interpreted using a modified grounded theory approach (Glaser & Strauss 1967; Shooter 2018). Grounded theory can be particularly useful in the development of theories and explanations where little or no literature exists (Glaser & Strauss 1967). Despite low church-attendance levels, existing data on the beliefs, practices, and identities

of Catholic women in Australia are drawn predominantly from women who are participants in Church life. This presents a significant gap in research.

Each interview was digitally recorded and transcribed. Transcripts were codified using NVivo software[16] in a series of stages based on the modified grounded theory approaches of Susan Shooter (2018) and Nicole Knickmeyer et al. (2003). In the first stage of coding, all interview data were taken into account and line-by-line conceptual "codes" were assigned to the text, using NVivo. This stage, called "open coding", is designed to let abstract themes emerge from the data (Shooter 2018). In the second stage, relationships between codes were explored and taken into account during a process of grouping codes into categories based on similarities. This was continued until a hierarchical model of the "core codes" materialised. The hierarchical model was considered complete when coding ceased contributing additional categories to the hierarchy. In a final stage, NVivo software was used to further examine "core codes", test hypotheses, and identify coding trends and common themes. Notes were kept throughout the coding process in order to keep a record of decisions, biases, and theoretical ideas that arose during analysis (Knickmeyer et al. 2003).

This thesis seeks to develop new theories of how Gen X women construct and enact their Catholic identities, both inside parish communities and at the margins of official Catholicism. Grounded theory prioritises the emergence of new conceptualisations "grounded" within participant experience (Glaser & Strauss 1967). As a feminist theological project, the goal of this thesis is to retrieve and centralise women's experiences and make them the locus for new theological and ecclesial visions. The following chapters analyse data and conceptualise a new theory of how Gen X women

[16] NVivo software provides the capability to categorise, classify, and arrange information in order to examine relationships and themes in the data.

live out their Catholic identities. I use vignettes to provide short narrative accounts from a selection of participants. These narratives accounts are used throughout Chapters Seven and Eight as a way of presenting the participants' stories directly alongside the critical analysis. Rather than isolating the participant's stories in a separate appendix, this method allows for a deeper engagement between analysis and experience.

Pseudonym	Year of birth	Diocese	Self-classification
Agatha	1973	Sydney	engaged
Antonia	1975	Not applicable	disaffiliated
Audrey	1973	Not applicable	disaffiliated
Ava	1977	Not applicable	disaffiliated
Bernadette	1967	Sydney	engaged
Billie	1967	Maitland-Newcastle	engaged
Chloe	1967	Sydney	disengaged
Eleanor	1976	Sydney	engaged
Elizabeth	1966	Perth	engaged
Emma	1965	Maitland-Newcastle	disengaged
Frances	1965	Sydney	disengaged
Gemma	1977	Not applicable	disaffiliated
Grace	1970	Not applicable	disaffiliated
Helen	1965	Not applicable	disaffiliated
Josephine	1966	Perth	engaged
Kim	1970	Melbourne	disengaged
Layla	1976	Melbourne	disengaged
Libby	1966	Sydney	disengaged
Lizbeth	1966	Perth	engaged
Luanne	1980	Adelaide	disengaged
Lucy	1969	Sydney	engaged
Marline	1969	Sydney	disengaged
Martha	1968	Adelaide	engaged
Mari	1972	Sydney	disengaged
Miriam	1977	Melbourne	disengaged
Monica	1970	Sydney	engaged

Nanette	1974	Melbourne	disengaged
Nora	1972	Not applicable	disaffiliated
Patricia	1974	Sydney	disengaged
Prudence	1965	Maitland-Newcastle	engaged
Regina	1974	Maitland-Newcastle	engaged
Ruby	1966	Cairns	disengaged
Skye	1969	Not applicable	disaffiliated
Stella	1967	Maitland-Newcastle	disengaged
Veronica	1972	Cairns	engaged
Violet	1970	Sydney	engaged

Table 1: Participant information

6.6 The cohort

Thirty-six Gen X women took part in this research project (see Table 1). Of the cohort, twenty-eight women classify themselves as *engaged* or *disengaged* Catholic women. These women are living and enacting various forms of Catholicism in either the Catholic dioceses of Melbourne, Sydney, Cairns, Maitland-Newcastle, Perth, or Adelaide. The remaining eight women self-classify as *disaffiliated* and no longer identify as Catholic. The engaged group consists of fourteen women born between 1965 and 1976; they are known in this study as Monica, Lucy, Eleanor, Violet, Billie, Bernadette, Prudence, Agatha, Elizabeth, Regina, Martha, Josephine, Lizbeth, and Veronica. This group is the most likely to be married and have children, less than half this group claim feminist identities. The disengaged group is made up of fourteen women born between 1965 and 1980; they have the pseudonyms Frances, Emma, Ruby, Libby, Stella, Chloe, Marline, Kim, Mari, Nanette, Patricia, Layla, Miriam, and Luanne. This cohort is slightly less likely to be married and have children than the women in the engaged group; all but two of the women claim feminist identities. The group that self-classify as disaffiliated is made up of eight women born between 1965 and 1977; they are known in this study as

Helen, Skye, Grace, Nora, Audrey, Antonia, Gemma, and Ava. The disaffiliated group is the least likely cohort to be married or have children; all but one self-identifies as feminist. Of the Gen X women sampled, thirty-one were born in Australia, three were born overseas in a non-English-speaking country, and two were born overseas in an English-speaking country. During their interviews, each of these women shared with me the story of their involvement in Catholicism and their narratives constitute the framework of the genealogy in Chapters Seven and Eight.

6.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have introduced the meaning and aims of this project's methodological approach and outlined its research design. Through an analysis of existing research, I established a substantial gap in the research, which investigates the identities of Gen X women in the Catholic Church in Australia. Then, I introduce and explore the method and methodological approach that Foucault names as genealogy. I explain why genealogy is an effective framework for analysing the narratives of Gen X Catholic women. Finally, I set out the research design of this project and introduce the cohort of thirty-six Gen X women who were interviewed for this research. In the chapters that follow, I use the methodological approach of genealogy to analyse data from these interviews.

Chapter Seven: Invented identities: Gen X women in Catholicism

7.1 Introduction

In this thesis, I have drawn on Michel Foucault's notion that identities are discursively constructed and performed within a nexus of knowledges and power to contest the unitary definition of Catholic identity set out and controlled by the magisterium. Instead, I have argued that Gen X women who self-classify as Catholic are both products and acting subjects of the power/knowledge regime of Catholicism with identities that are constructed and performed from a matrix of cultural understandings, individual experiences, and institutional authority.

As I explained in the previous chapter, a Foucauldian genealogy constitutes an attempt to explain the origins and development of ideas and practices within systems of power/knowledge and to explore the ways in which they constitute individual and collective subjectivity. In his genealogies, Foucault attempts to debunk the notion that practices, identities, and institutions are constructed in a linear and cumulative manner. Instead, he questions the legitimacy of continuous histories and totalising theories. He uses the term "subjugated knowledges" to refer to ideas, principles, and beliefs that have been lost within a dominant, all-encompassing regime or theoretical framework. In Catholicism, subjugated knowledges are visible when marginalised groups resist dominant, magisterial discourses. Genealogy presents a method and methodological approach for exploring subjugated knowledges and exposing what kinds of ideas, conditions, categories, and processes determine Gen X women's Catholic identities and *praxis*, and to what effect.

Using the methodological principles of genealogy, the following chapters present an analysis of data from the thirty-six interviews I conducted with Gen X women who

currently or previously self-identified as Catholic. In this chapter, I use interview data to explore the narratives of study participants to produce a genealogy of Gen X women's identities and participation. Vignettes provide short narrative accounts from a selection of study participants as a way of presenting their stories directly alongside the critical analysis. I develop the concept interpretive adjustment and use it in conjunction with technologies of Catholicism to shed light on the diverse ways Gen X women are engaging with Catholicism and using different forms of ritual and *praxis* to express their Catholic identities and attain, sustain, and subvert recognisability in Catholicism.

7.2 Constructing a recognisable Catholic identity

In the preceding chapters, I used the scholarship of Judith Butler, in conversation with Foucault, to develop the term *technologies of Catholicism*. Technologies of Catholicism are a type of Foucauldian technologies of self. They account for the doctrines, practices, teachings, operations, and *praxis* that are both prescribed by official Catholicism and form part of women's everyday embodied practices and experiences. Women perform and use technologies of Catholicism on their bodies, souls, and thoughts to bring into being various conceptions of self and identity. Accordingly, technologies of Catholicism are linked to governmentality or the way that normative forms of gesture, movement, speech, and ritual support and feed into macro and micro power relations that regulate recognisability. For instance, in the power/knowledge regime of Catholicism, the magisterial expectation that all Catholics will attend Mass on Sundays and other designated days is set out in both catechism and Church law. As a result, in official and expert Catholic narratives, weekly Mass attendance is both a normative practice and a key marker of Catholic identity. A withdrawal from regular Mass attendance is often understood as a step on the path towards disaffiliation (Bullivant 2019).

Notably, all the women interviewed in this study who self-classify as engaged Catholic women regularly attend Mass. Monica, Lucy, Eleanor, Violet, Bernadette, Prudence, Agatha, Regina, and Martha attend weekly or more often, and Elizabeth and Billie attend at least a couple of times a month. Disengaged Gen X women often report a higher level of Catholic salience yet self-nominate as disengaged based predominantly on their infrequent Mass attendance. For example, Marline no longer attends Mass but comments of her Catholicism: 'it's at the core of who I am'. Patricia observes:

> Understanding going to Mass as any kind of religious obligation is not within my reality … But there have been occasions where I have gone into a church on my own, usually difficult moments in my life … I don't know, it's a weird thing. It's like it's a quiet place where you can contemplate … I do feel like I belong there. I do feel connected to [the Catholic Church] in some way. But I don't sit in there and say prayers to … a classic Catholic personal God … it's overwhelmingly a cultural thing.

Nanette explains:

> Personally, I'm barely connecting into [Catholicism] formally, but I still see myself as part of church. I'm still Catholic, I still have an interest, I want to contribute to the discussion.

Participants who are not attending Mass do use other technologies of Catholicism to readily claim a Catholic identity but do so in a way that acknowledges that they are not quite living up to the normative magisterial model of participation. For instance, Stella, who attends Mass only at Christmas and Easter, defends her decision not to attend Mass more regularly:

> You know I still believe in God … But I just do it privately … the groundings of my faith are something that is embedded in me from that strong grounding that I was given growing up and I'm quite thankful for that … I just don't feel that I need to go to Mass every week.

Resisting magisterial expectations, Stella asserts:

> I guess it meets my needs and whether or not the people who think that, you know, that they are the governors of religion, they mightn't agree, but for me, it satisfies me.

Obligations related to Mass attendance and other sacramental practices are set out in Catholic teaching and Church law; however, they are not policed by any external human authority. Instead, the norm of Mass attendance is regulated and enforced as a type of bio-power where Catholic women are both controlled and coerced by automated and individualised mechanisms of self-surveillance (Foucault 2010b). Expectations are set up and monitored through a complex process of internal and external socialisations, including different modes of subjection. Both happiness (Ahmed 2010) and shame (Monagle 2020; Ratinen 2019) are normalising technologies. The hermeneutics of Catholic doctrine and the promise of fulfilment and support from an all-loving God thus work by constraining women's possibility and capacity to envision themselves otherwise than culturally required. Herein, regular Mass attendance is both a technology of Catholicism and a norm of recognition, attainable and enviable for all Catholic women, who, through agentic compliance and "good choices", can achieve recognisability or status as a "good Catholic woman". This does not mean Catholic women are without autonomy or agency, trapped by magisterial norms. Nor does it imply that Catholic women's agency exists simply in a dichotomization of subordination versus subversion, or empowerment versus accommodation.

7.3 Negotiating recognisability

In Chapters Five and Six, I drew on insights from Foucault and Butler to argue that power is not simply a force that dominates or compels but is instead a series of strategic and productive relations that permeate life. Capillaries of power are found in the discursive networks of the power/knowledge regime of Catholicism, different modes of subjection,

and everyday life. The theory that the materialisation of subjectivity and recognisability in Catholicism operate only through the repetitive citation of magisterial obligations and regulatory norms, is therefore directly counter to the idea of a Catholic woman existing outside these same obligations and norms. The notion that 'the subject who would resist such norms is itself enabled, if not produced, by such norms' (p. xxiii) is named by Butler (2014) as the "paradox of subjectivation". Butler's "paradox of subjectivation" means that the reiterative performance of a norm operates not only to consolidate a structure of power/knowledge but also provides the means to destabilise it (Mahmood 2012). Thus, recognisability does not precede but is produced through the productive reiterability of magisterial obligations, regulatory norms, technologies of Catholicism, and everyday life as relations of power and resistance.

The capacity for Gen X women who self-classify as Catholic to subvert hegemonic, *kyriarchal* injunctions, obligations, and norms in Catholicism, including Mass attendance, is dependent on an intersection of various complex factors. When Foucault (1980) discusses methodological precautions related to the study of power he claims that research should centre on the subject rather than the source of power. He contends:

> In the very first place, it seemed important to accept that the analysis in question should not concern itself with the regulated and legitimate forms of power in their central locations, with the general mechanisms through which they operate, and the continued effects of these. On the contrary, it should be concerned with power at the extremities, in its ultimate destinations, with those points where it becomes capillary … Let us not, therefore, ask why certain people want to dominate, what they seek, what is their overall strategy. Let us ask, instead, how things work at the level of on-going subjugation, at the level of those continuous and un-interrupted processes which subject our bodies, govern our gestures, dictate our behaviours etc … individuals are the vehicles of power, not its points of application. (Foucault 1980, pp. 96-8)

Catholicism has a strong tradition of centralised magisterial authority that discourages individual autonomous authority or identities (Dillon 2018; Jordan 1999, 2000). Research in Australia and overseas, however, shows large numbers of self-identified Catholics distance themselves from binding, authoritarian teachings on matters of ritual practice, faith, and morals, yet still retain a sense of Catholic identity (Dillon 2018; Dixon 2004; Leming 2007; Macdonald et al. 1999; McEwan 2018; Rymarz 2004).

7.4 Interpretive adjustments

Gen X women who self-classify as Catholic are not just part of the Catholic Church. Their subjectivities and identities are formed by intersections of race, class, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and nationhood (Schüssler Fiorenza 2016). Therefore, while the power of the *kyriarchal* magisterial edicts to compel and constitute recognisability is an important factor, technologies of Catholicism, such as Mass attendance, are not produced in a discursive vacuum. Rather, they are tied to the wider technologies of subjectivity that are discursively available. Catholicism is but one aspect of a Gen X Catholic woman's broader cultural and social life. Other discursive systems of power/knowledge, including feminism, secularisation, and consumerism, present contemporary women with multiple avenues for self-expression. Furthermore, the different modes of subjection whereby women constitute subjectivity can result in Gen X women looking beyond doctrinal demands and drawing on other theological and moral narratives, including how they feel about and comprehend their relationship with an all-loving God (Ahmed 2010; Ratinen 2019). Conflicting demands can break down plausibility structures, which mean that as Gen X women enact magisterial teachings and negotiate technologies of Catholicism, attempting to achieve recognisability, weaknesses can be revealed and there is the possibility of practising Catholicism in unexpected ways.

Feminist scholars have theorised the different ways that Catholic women use strategies to adjust and adapt hegemonic Catholic teachings and practices and negotiate agency and competing identities (Abraham 2019; Dillon 1999, 2018; Leming 2007). Laura Leming (2007) proposes that '*flexible alignment strategies* allow people to position themselves with reference to structural religion in ways that help them negotiate religious identity and other valued identities' (p. 87; my emphasis). Michele Dillon (1999, 2018) conceives the term *interpretive autonomy* to be the autonomous interpretive stance adherents adopt concerning teachings on matters of faith and morals in Catholicism. Kochurini Abraham (2019) names *tactical bargains* the negotiations of 'women who do not outrightly contest patriarchally defined power dynamics of gender but create their own space for a meaningful negotiation of power in their lives' (p. 173).

I name the rejection, negotiation, and resistance of hegemonic Catholic injunctions, teachings, and technologies of Catholicism: *interpretive adjustments*. Interpretive adjustments are hermeneutic techniques, actions, and strategies that enable women to position themselves both within and in reference to different modes of subjection within the power/knowledge regime of official Catholicism. The power to constitute self and create opportunities for new possibilities and freedoms, when using technologies of Catholicism, requires implicitly disobedient or noncompliant self-relations. Interpretive adjustments incorporate actions and strategies of attachment and avoidance, including the devices of flexible alignment, tactical bargains, and interpretive autonomy.

Foucault (1997a) notes that 'resistance is part of this strategic relationship of which power consists' (p. 168) and while power can be stabilised in institutions, there is potential for individuals and social movements to have an impact on the status quo. He identifies various forms of 'counter-conduct, all of which tend to redistribute, reverse,

nullify, and partially or totally discredit pastoral power in the systems of salvation, obedience, and truth' (Foucault 2007a, p. 204). Butler (2018) also acknowledges that cultural conventions can intervene within a regulatory field of norms to produce confusion or conflict. She claims that in the process of enactment of regulatory norms, other desires can start to govern, acting as forms of resistance, with a result that is not precisely what was planned (Butler 2015). Interpretive adjustments can empower women to make sense and negotiate their Catholic identities in relation to technologies of Catholicism and magisterial norms that establish recognisability, other valued identities and value systems, including various intersections of sexual orientation, class, gender, ethnicity, race, and nationhood. Interpretive adjustments can involve strategic attachments and avoidances of particular people, places, language, and/or technologies of Catholicism. I have included descriptions of interpretive adjustments as used by various participants in Table 2.

Interpretive adjustment	
Description	**Example** (used and described by participants. Technology of Catholicism/ Catholic teaching adjusted in **bold**).
Replaces masculine language.	Nanette responds spontaneously during the **Mass**. Luanne changes male pronouns in the **Mass** to inclusive language.
Blends Catholic prayer with secular practices and other spiritualities.	Kim prays the **Rosary** in conjunction with Tarot and journaling. Lizbeth works with a Jungian spiritual director to work on her dreams, and mindfulness as a form of **prayer**.
Adapts Catholic ritual.	Elizabeth splashes **holy water** around her home to eliminate "bad juju" or "bad energy".
Strategically adapts their positioning to navigate spatial power dynamics.	Martha and Bernadette consciously carve out a space for themselves in **public ministry**.

Are guided by life experience rather than Catholic teachings and doctrine.	Mari, Patricia, and Martha reject the Catholic teaching not to use **birth control** and instead draw on their life experiences.
Reconceptualise Mary as a powerful woman with agency and sexuality.	Bernadette and Marline use **storytelling** to reconceptualise Mary beyond a virginial archetype.
Adjusting behaviour, speech, and attitudes to circumvent harm and suffering.	Monica **prays** and **seeks counsel** from priests regarding using assistive reproductive technologies even though she knows it is against Catholic teaching.

Table 2: Examples of interpretive adjustments

Nanette

Nanette grew up as part of a large Catholic family. Mass attendance every Sunday was an important part of her upbringing. She says, 'the community was more than just Mass on Sunday'. The nuns who taught Nanette encouraged her to think independently and explore her questions about Catholicism; she characterises them as "strong women". Largely because of their influence, Nanette volunteered and did missionary work in Australia and overseas before training as a teacher.

Nanette now works in Catholic education and has post-graduate qualifications in theology. She is heavily involved in social justice activism and advocacy. Describing prayer as something she dips in and out of, Nanette notes:

> I wouldn't use any formal prayer, even though, I learnt many of them in primary school. They were drilled into us. I don't go back to that … I respond spontaneously.

Nanette explains that she gets 'uncomfortable with the masculine terms for God'. She explains that, for her, God is:

> The divine mystery, the transcendent, the light in the world, something that is close to us but bigger, so much bigger than anything we can imagine. Something … our language can't really describe. I guess I acknowledge the limitations of our language in trying to describe something that is not of this world, so a force of love … So, yes, not concrete in any real analogy.

Nanette now feels disconnected from official Catholicism and attends Mass irregularly. She asserts:

> I couldn't go to Mass because I was just overcome in the middle of Eucharistic prayer with a sense of, "Where am I in this?" and a complete despair at that, that I could not see myself in this due to the masculine pronouns and that sort of thing.

Instead of attending Mass, Nanette finds a sense of belonging in a women's circle that 'come together under a sense of spirituality, simplicity, and contributing to the world'. As her interview draws to a close, Nanette reflects:

> Do we stay in and keep fighting? At what point do we go – what point do we just give up and leave them to it, to become this obsolete little group of mainly men and few women and do their thing? … I sit there, and I'm really challenged by that, and I kind of go, "How can I continue?" but at the same time, I think my nature of wanting to do the right thing and follow the rules also struggles with me moving out of it … And, well, it's my Church. So why should I leave?

7.5 "Where am I in this?": Negotiating recognisability using interpretive adjustments

As I discussed earlier in this chapter, recognisability as a "good Catholic woman" is produced by the enactment of certain hegemonic, normative technologies of Catholicism prescribed by the magisterium. However, the stability of these normative practices, as with other social and religious norms, is a function of its repeated enactment. Here, agency resides within the iterability of performativity (Butler 2011). That is, agency finds its basis in the essential openness of each iteration and the possibility that an iteration might not succeed or may be reappropriated or re-signified for purposes other than consolidation of the norm (Mahmood 2012). Interpretive adjustments are one way Gen X women interrupt, reappropriate, and re-signify hegemonic technologies of Catholicism.

For instance, the reiterative nature of regular Mass attendance is intended to

renew, nourish, and affirm the efficacy and plausibility of Catholic faith. The magisterium purports that in the Mass adherents encounter and are nourished by Christ, in scripture and the Eucharist and thus become "Church", the mystical living body of Christ in the world (Francis 2017). Josephine, Lucy, and Billie maintain a deep spiritual connection with the Mass. Josephine, a weekly attendee, contends 'I think [the Mass] is central to what we're all doing, and what we believe. It's the centre of my belief'. Billie states:

> I go for downtime; I go for singing and I go to hear a message to live my life differently or to stay on track in the homily or sermon. I also go for ritual or ceremony. I love that part of Catholic Church.

Lucy reflects:

> Seriously in the last few years there have been times where I have really questioned being a member of the Catholic Church. My faith will always be with me … my faith is about my relationship with God – it is not actually anything to do with the church however there is comfort from the rituals that we are so used to.

For Billie, Josephine, Lucy, and other regular Mass attendees in this study, compliance with magisterial norms of recognisability are accompanied by personal and spiritual benefits. The regularity of their Mass attendance is, in part, the fulfilment of a personal obligation to an all-loving God, which strengthens their Catholic faith and in turn increases the likelihood of continued compliance.

When a regulatory norm is enacted over and over again, however, the process of its repetition can open up its own weakness (Butler 2018). The continuous re-enactment of Mass attendance can produce something not necessarily aligned with its aims. Overall, participants in this study report that the Masses they attend lack relevance and are unengaging or unsatisfying. Some women express a desire for the Mass to be inspiring and applicable to their lives. As Monica purports:

> People just don't see the benefit of going to church – even me. It's not enriching. I think they probably feel they should go to Mass – they don't go – they can't be bothered – they'd rather not think about it.

Nanette and Luanne speak of their discomfort with masculine language. Layla cites difficulty and discomfort with the most recent changes in the language of the Mass and claims 'the thought of going to Mass makes me anxious, because it's not what I remember it to be'. Chloe contends the Mass is 'very boring and very rote' and 'just dragged on'. Veronica notes the Mass is 'not dynamic' and suggests many people are 'yearning for something that is appealing'. Miriam states that the Mass is not focused on God and is a 'big production' that lacks meaning with 'sleep more a priority on a Sunday'. She says the following:

> If you're not part of [Catholicism] and you walk past a church and they're praying, it does look very complicated, what people are doing. The whole going to Mass and sitting down, standing up, sitting down, kneeling, standing up, sitting down, you know, it's those sorts of practices it's like we're all there to listen that's basically what you're doing, listen and pray, standing up, sitting down, those traditions are just a form of showing respect, but at the same time … I don't really agree with it and I don't agree with getting dressed up in all the big robes and things like that … that's not for me.

Libby, who attends Mass infrequently, best articulates the overall lack of relevance of the Mass for the cohort. She claims the following:

> I find it very frustrating and confronting. So, every now and again I just get the urge to go to Mass, but when I do, then I don't do it again for a long time. It's such an overwhelmingly male environment, such a disempowering environment. Just as a woman and as a member of the laity, I feel like you're there to serve the institutional Church and it's got very little to do with what we were taught about God as a child. It feels like I have no role in that, except in terms of audience participation. I find a lot of what is taught in the sermons to be very frustrating and confronting. I also think some of the power of ceremony has been stripped away. So, it's not as if you're getting anything from the ceremony itself. So, all of the more modern elements are not engaging

> and are, in fact, alienating. It still has all the male authority and it's lost some of the power of ceremony.

Interpretive adjustments formed by speech and language are one way Gen X women extend their agency while still complying with the magisterial norm for regular Mass attendance. For example, the hegemonic discourse of "God-he" is deeply socialised in official Catholicism. In Catholicism, God is officially proclaimed as Spirit and beyond male or female personification (CCC, para. 239). The centrality and constant replication of male language and images of God in magisterial documents, liturgy, preaching, worship, and catechesis, however, communicate a different message: 'God is male, or at least more like a man than a woman, or at least more fittingly addressed as male than as female' (Johnson 2002b, p. 5). Largely because the use of masculine terms for God, Nanette describes herself as 'barely connected' during the Mass. Words matter here, not just symbolically, but theologically. Nanette asks herself "Where am I in this?" and in order to avoid the painful encounter she embeds interpretive adjustments in her language to shape her experience of the Mass. When Nanette ignores the prayers of her childhood and responds spontaneously, she is enacting interpretive adjustments to affirm her equal dignity before God and alter the way she enacts and performs her Catholic identity.

As they tell their stories, several participants in this study recall grappling with the notion of an all-powerful "God-he". They recount how they use interpretive adjustments through speech acts to negotiate understandings that they find limiting or marginalising. In her interview, Luanne explains how she attends Mass as part of her devotion to God. She describes how she takes control of her experience by adapting the words she speaks and says the following:

> I do get a bit annoyed, sometimes I change it into my own words. A couple of the prayers where they talk about his and his Church. I will say God and God's Church. So, I will use God instead of his and I will sort of make a point of that just to myself.

Several participants tell stories of how the representation of God as personified, all-powerful, and male are incompatible with their innate understanding of an all-loving, omnipresent God. Libby asserts:

> The idea that the creator would be male, I don't accept that at all. The idea that the being with all the power in the universe is male I don't accept at all. The idea that the only conduit - or the primary conduit for that being is his only son, again male, I don't accept that … God to me is more akin to the Holy Spirit. I believe that, there is a force of goodness, of creation, of love that exists separately from the interactions of people … that exists in the universe. That is how I see God, rather than God being an entity. It's a bit like the force in *Star Wars* I guess … I connect with that quite a lot. I think part of our journey is to try to align ourselves more with that force and tap into that force.

The tension between the normative "God-he" representation and women's intuitive or spiritual knowing was present in women's narratives. Miriam claims:

> I don't think God is just a one-person thing. There is a higher being, or there is something more than just us whether it's God or the universe … I do pray to God … I just put it out there and you know, think positive thoughts or whatever. I would say [God is] more like an energy force … a power beyond me.

Patricia contends:

> I mean I don't have any belief in a personal god. So, the idea of anyone, you know, up in the sky approving or disapproving of my behaviour, that doesn't exist for me … I don't know if I would ever really talk about God as something I believe in. I don't know. I mean there are mysteries, I don't discount them. I wouldn't go around calling myself an atheist … I'm just not really interested, I suppose, in the question of whether or not God exists … I don't believe that there's a mind out there that resembles our own minds in any way, that's handed us a certain set of rules, that observes our behaviour, that's going to parcel out rewards and punishments. I don't believe in any of that stuff … I believe I suppose in some sort of an idea of transcendence, some kind of meaning … grace has some meaning to me, but the idea that there's some kind of authority distributing that grace, I don't believe that.

Bernadette says the following:

> I speak to [God] like he's a person, but I know he's not a person. “He” because that's how it was when I was growing up … I don't want to say it, but I think it's a bloke … And I haven't had a good experience with a man being in charge.

Eleanor reflects:

> I think God is a mystery we never fully understand. Part of me thinks that God can be anything because he created everything but part of me thinks he is a father. We can never fully understand as God always is and always was. You know it's hard to get your head around all that.

Eleanor clearly articulates how she finds the representation of God as a man and father in Catholic liturgy and formal prayers conflictive and fraught. She explains, ‘And I think if you don't have that love of a father, a paternal father, it's very hard to make the next leap that there is a Heavenly Father that loves you’.

The inability to make sense of the hegemonic expression of God as an all-powerful, personified man can have an impact in how participants take-up various technologies of Catholicism. For example, Frances maintains:

> I don't believe that there's a God that is looking down controlling my day-to-day life or engaged and able to intervene on an individual basis. I think that possibly there is a spirituality that we don't quite understand as humans, that we haven't grasped. Part of that spirituality, for want of a better term, is an embracing of humanity. So, I might meditate on something you know, if there's been something horrific happening in the world, yes, my mind goes to whatever power there might be to provide whatever relief and support there might be, but nothing beyond that. I don't see a God. I feel there's a spirituality in humanity that we haven't quite we don't understand all the dimensions yet.

When Gen X women fail to recognise the “God-he” as expressed in official Catholic liturgies, prayers, and rituals, they often take up technologies of Catholicism unsanctioned by the magisterium.

Kim

Kim grew up in rural Australia in a large Catholic family. Multi-generational community involvement in the local Catholic parish was a significant part of her upbringing.

Now, Kim does not attend Mass and hasn't for years. When I asked about her participation in other sacraments she exclaimed, 'I always thought reconciliation a load of hogwash even as a kid I was just like I couldn't believe a kid could be a sinner'. Kim, however, prays regularly and describes a blending of Catholic pieties with secular practices and spiritualities. She notes:

> I pray all the time. I often say the Rosary … and there's never not a connection … it is definitely informal … I often meditate I often do tarot cards in the morning. I have this little routine I do tarot cards and I journal; I pray in the evening … It's sort of like for me in my daily practice it's when there is something that I need support with or that I need help with it's just like that's who I talk to.

When I asked Kim who she is talking to when she prays, she conveys certainty that she is communicating with Christ and his mother Mary. She claims the following:

> I do the Rosary to Mary because I think that I feel more connected with her because she's a woman and she was a woman on this earth. But it is like Christ over arches all of that … It is hard to describe it it is like when I'm at work I'm doing Christ's work; I'm not doing my work.

Disconnection from the official Catholic Church and regular Mass attendance was gradual for Kim. She describes a trip to Europe and the Vatican:

> In Rome homeless people were everywhere and it was quite confronting for my kids … that level of opulence [in the Vatican] and the paintings that they hold and the wealth … and not twenty metres from their front gate is extreme poverty and that makes no sense to me.

Asked if there were any key moments when she decided to "stay" or abandon her Catholic identity, she recalls the following:

> There were multiple moments that added up. I remember trying to go a service at Christmas or something like that and I remember listening to the priest and whatever he had to say … And I was just "oh my God this makes no sense". How they go about their business makes no sense and the way that a liturgy is run. Then I started experiencing "the other". When [my child] was in a preschool and they had a Winter Festival they lit up a spiral and all the kids were sitting quietly on the seats and then they walked the Spiral and then the Spiral lit up. And I was like this is church for me – that other shit that is run by a male is not church. It was just that things started not making sense and it was like, "Why is he in the robes? Why is he saying these prayers?" … But now I feel so different and disconnected I can hardly recollect … I think it was just a series of moments.

For Kim, the official Catholic Church, the Mass, and the male clerical hierarchy lack credibility and when speaking of her 'lineage of faith' she refers to the women in her family. She remembers a type of 'inherent faith' that was expressed in her mother and grandmother as a 'sense of reverence' and the way they 'experience the beauty' of the everyday.

For Kim, God is not a male patriarch but 'encompasses all of it, spirit, Jesus, something beyond me. God oversees all'. Throughout her interview, she conveys a type of cognitive dissonance or inconsistency; Catholicism is her family heritage but so much of it makes no sense to her. She ends her interview with the following statement:

> I think it's very interesting that I still call myself Catholic. I think I might need to change it, but I don't know what I change it to. How do you get rid of it? Do you have any ideas?

7.6 "I think I might need to change it": Popular pieties

Popular pieties are acts of religiosity and devotion that originate from and are practised by ordinary Catholics (Mong 2019). They are technologies of Catholicism and can include private prayer, scripture reading, acts of devotion, and rituals that can operate in opposition or in harmony with the Mass and other forms of worship sanctioned by the magisterium. In the *Directory on popular piety and the liturgy: Principles and guidelines*

(2001), the magisterium[17] claims that popular pieties are the 'true treasure of the people of God' (para. 61) and highlights their 'undeniable qualities' (para. 64), yet also points out the 'dangers which can affect it' (para. 64). These are listed and include:

> lack of a sufficient number of Christian elements such as the salvific significance of the Resurrection of Christ, an awareness of belonging to the Church, the person and action of the Holy Spirit; a disproportionate interest between the Saints and the absolute sovereignty of Jesus Christ and his mysteries; lack of direct contact with Sacred Scripture; isolation from the Church's sacramental life; a dichotomy between worship and the duties of Christian life; a utilitarian view of some forms of popular piety; the use of signs, gestures and formulae, which sometimes become excessively important or even theatrical and in certain instances, the risk of promoting sects, or even superstition, magic, fatalism or oppression. (Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments 2001, para. 64)

In official Catholicism, women have no role in establishing or adjusting hegemonic magisterial forms of ritual and worship. Popular pieties present opportunities for women to move within and against official and regulatory discourses in Catholicism.

When acts of popular piety are characterised by refusal, curiosity, and innovation, they can create opportunities for a type of Catholic subjectivity that is not always in harmony with the ideals of the magisterium. For instance, a number of participants in this study speak of how as a technology of Catholicism and act of faith they pray to Saint Mary MacKillop and asked for her intercession. Stella recalls how she has a 'strong connection to Mary MacKillop' and organises a group of family members to pray novenas to Mary MacKillop whenever relatives are sick or dying. Emma tells the following story:

> My mum took really sick and was in intensive care … they kept telling me that we wouldn't get her out … and they kept saying start making plans she's not going to get out of here. I had a bottle of holy water from Lourdes at home my cousin had bought,

[17] The document is authored by the *Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments* with the approval of John Paul II.

> and I got it out of the cupboard … and I put it in my handbag and every day I prayed to Mary MacKillop, it was before she became canonised. I would say "please Mother Mary, please Mary MacKillop, please fix her" and I put holy water on her forehead and on her ear lobes and after nineteen days she came out.

Monica recounts attending a healing Mass at a chapel dedicated to Mary MacKillop where she prays for her IVF treatment to work even though she knows it is against official Catholic teachings. Ruby keeps a Mary MacKillop bookmark and speaks of her as she recounts her dissatisfaction with the Catholic hierarchy.

When popular pieties are enacted in conjunction with interpretive adjustments, they can create moments of discontinuity that both challenge the legitimacy of and transform magisterial norms and practices. Earlier in this chapter, I told the story of Nanette who uses interpretive adjustments to change language about God as she prays the Mass. As she makes interpretive adjustments, her experiences are altered and what emerges is a renewed experience of the Mass – a transformed technology of Catholicism. In a similar way, Kim and other study participants use interpretive adjustments as they enact private prayer, scripture reading, acts of devotion, and rituals. They transform or bring about new popular pieties that produce Catholic subjectivity in a way relevant to their own lives and situations. For instance, during her interview, Kim explains her doubt and disengagement when the Mass and male-only Catholic priesthood no longer make sense. As she engages in devotional practices and popular pieties as technologies of Catholicism, Kim uses interpretive adjustments to push at boundaries set by magisterial edicts. Her actions and words challenge the natural inevitability and stability of established magisterial norms. Kim's agency is activated, she is inspired, and her Catholic identity materialises in part because of the abandonment and refusal of normative *praxis*. As Kim prays the Rosary, works, reads her Tarot cards, journals, and invokes Jesus and Mary in the everyday, she is engaging with Catholicism, spirituality, magic, and the

divine. Her prayer and ritual life act with and against official Catholicism and other discourses including consumerism, feminism, and neoliberalism, producing confusion and conflict as competing claims of recognisability are negotiated. What emerges are new, altered technologies of Catholicism through which Kim produces her inherent, yet transformed Catholic identity.

As the women I interviewed enact and embody technologies of Catholicism including private prayer, scripture reading, acts of devotion, and rituals in conjunction with interpretive adjustments, new popular pieties emerge that involve alternative and potentially opposing conventions. Several participants in this study report praying Catholic formal prayers with adaptations from a blend of Christian denominations, religious traditions, and spiritualities. For instance, Eleanor attends Mass weekly, yet also describes using a blend of Catholic prayers, bible reading, and an impromptu style of prayer she learned when involved with a Baptist Bible study group and Pentecostal prayer group. She uses these practices to navigate difficult times and strengthen her relationship with God:

> You know I would pray every day. I pray in the morning. Before I get out of bed I pray, and I pray regularly at night … I read the Bible quite a lot … I started going to a [Baptist] women's bible study … I was going through a very difficult phase … they prayed over me and I had never experienced that before. They all came around me and they put their hands on me and they all just started praying like they would take turns and it was just amazing … it gave me so much peace.

Lucy often sits by herself in a church as a form of prayer:

> Sometimes I will just go and sit in the church if I feel the need to. If I'm feeling rattled or just feeling out of sorts … I will go and sit in the quiet church. It's different from just lying down on my bed or sitting down on my lounge and talking to God … I don't actually say or think anything – I just sit. And that just… I guess that feels like a prayer.

Lizbeth explains how she regularly meets with a Jungian spiritual director to work on contemplative prayer, her dreams, and mindfulness as a form of Catholic practice:

> I also practise mindfulness … What arises from my dreams I try to sit with as a form of prayer. For me prayer, really, is a bringing to consciousness of people I'm holding in my thoughts. So, you know, if I'm thinking particularly about someone … I hold them in my thoughts and for me that is holding them in the presence of God.

Patricia reflects on her prayer life:

> I had a lot of difficulty getting pregnant with my kids … there was church on my way home, and I used to go in there. But … I mostly [when I went in the church] I used to just think about my grandmother, the one who's dead … I haven't said a prayer in a very long time. I think if I find myself in a church… I will kind of go into that kind of reflective mode where you're trying to connect with something bigger than yourself.

Elizabeth, when asked about whether she prayed privately, claims the following:

> Not a lot, to be honest. Not a lot. Not – certainly not on a daily basis … I mean, I will say prayers with my daughter at bedtime … and you know, I've got my holy water, big jugs of it here … I'll occasionally flick that around when things are getting a little bit tense, and there's a whole lot of "bad juju" in the house and I'll flash that shit around.

Elizabeth's reference to "bad juju" – a slang term that equates to "bad energy" – is typical of how some participants in this study blend popular spiritualities with Catholic traditions.

Marline

Marline works as a teacher in a non-Catholic school. Until recently, Marline was a regular Mass attendee, was on the reading roster in her local parish, and assisted with small group sacramental classes. When I asked about her current participation, she describes herself as a 'horrified bystander'. This, she claims, is because of the hypocrisy and inaction of the Australian hierarchy around the current crisis involving CPCSA.

Marline often enters a church to feel close to God. She says, ‘My participation is minimal to nil simply because while the faith, the faith I believe in is strong…it's the practices and the structures and the institution that I find problematic’. She recalls the following:

> I might take myself off to the church quietly. I may just do a Rosary … I have essentially abandoned the rituals of the institution, but I turn to the Rosary when I need clarity. It provides comfort – the simple act of reciting those words is meditative and calming. I have turned to the Rosary for as long as I can remember.

Even though Marline has a strong affiliation with Mary the mother of Jesus and the Rosary, she critiques magisterial Mariology as limited and oppressive for women. She states, ‘We are set up to fail. We cannot be both [virgin and mother]. We can’t. It is just impossible. So here we are … we are expected to accept inadequacy’.

Taking the viewpoint that Mary is ‘sidelined’ by the magisterium, Marline links Mary’s marginalisation to the inequality women experience in Catholicism. She claims the following:

> We are one of the very few, if only Christian faiths that puts Mary at the front. We have this extraordinary connection to the Madonna and there she is sidelined. Females are sidelined … she is the great saint. She sacrificed so much. Imagine, the idea of watching your son being crucified and still holding faith – it is extraordinary.

Marline does not have any difficulty with the magisterial notion that purports women, like Mary, should take on a nurturing role. Her issue is with the hypocrisy of the hierarchy and the lack of equality for women in Catholicism. She reflects:

> Every image of Mary where she is nurturing, she is in the background, but she's foregrounded as that's women’s role. And we [women] can nurture all we like, but we shouldn’t be sidelined. If you want that to be part of the religion, and obviously it has to be, then give it it's due.

For some, Marline’s lack of regular Mass attendance might be problematic, but it is not for her. Her practice of the Rosary is not just a citation of words – it is heartfelt and sincere. She finds no need for sacramental rituals and states:

> I think prayer is more than kneeling down and going through the Rosary. I think the prayer is actually acting, and being, and breathing, and thinking, and questioning … I don't think we have to go to Communion. I don't have to go to the sacraments to be to be Catholic. I don't think that is appropriate.

The magisterium's sidelining of Mary and by association all women means that Marline no longer finds official Catholicism either credible or plausible. She is Catholic on her own terms; this means "walking the talk" and living a life that mirrors Christian ideals of justice, service, and integrity.

7.7 "I turn to the Rosary when I need clarity": Marian pieties

During their interviews, participants in this study frequently refer to Mary, the mother of Jesus. They often tell stories of formative experiences that involve being conditioned to magisterial Mariology and the associated theological rewards compliance to Marian ideals provide. For example, Patricia remembers her grandmother's house filled with Marian objects:

> I loved them. [My grandmother] had an image of a beautiful young woman with the Middle Eastern kind of – call it a hijab … looking out sort in the frame. A little baby resting here and a kind of … it was probably the Star of Bethlehem and a little kind of Israel-style village up on a hill. She had our Lady of Perpetual Succour, the old sort of green-and-gold icon. She had, above the piano, a Jesus with the Sacred Heart and the Blessed Virgin … They were everywhere … There might have been an old statue that they knelt down before and said the Rosary in front of when my mother was a child. I mean my mother can remember saying the Rosary every week, but for me it was more that my grandmother would do it when she had us kind of captive. In the car I remember it happening a lot.

In official Catholicism, ecclesial imagery and Mariology constructs Mary and womanhood in terms of the impossible and dichotomous ideal of motherhood with virginity. These gendered and sexual paradigms in Catholicism can create serious difficulties for Gen X women particularly in the way that they are used by the magisterium

and others to sanction and affirm *kyriarchal* systems and structures. For instance, Chloe compares the status of women in Catholicism to that of men and problematises the marginalisation of women. She states:

> You are either a virgin or a mother. You are not a person; you are a thing. You can't be just a person. A man can be a person. He doesn't have to be a virgin or a father or fatherhood. He can be a person … It's a lot put on to a poor woman. A woman can be anything she wants. She is equal to a man. They don't have anywhere that says a man can be a virgin or a father.

In official Catholicism, women's roles are codified in accordance with the norms of womanhood imaged by Mary within magisterial Mariology. In a similar way to Marline and Chloe, Nanette claims that this is limiting for Mary, women, and all humanity:

> When Mary is talked about in that way in particular, we lose so much of her story … we limit and we place women and sexuality so closely together and I just find it's limiting for all of us, everyone, when we do that, because it so limits how we can look at the human person. And it just brings into me that sense of the feminine genius and the complementarity theology where it puts us all in roles that we don't fit in and limits the understanding of the human person.

Marline, Chloe, and Nanette strongly communicate their struggle to recognise themselves in the imagery of magisterial Mariology.

Despite the limitations, Gen X Catholic women are still praying the Rosary and using other forms of Marian piety sanctioned by the magisterium. As they use and enact these particular technologies of Catholicism, women are ultimately participating in a *kyriarchal* culture with a history of marginalising women. This doesn't mean that all women are self-objectifying. Regina's husband is in a motor bike group. She prays the Rosary only while she is riding with him:

> When I'm on the bike I pray a lot … [Our last trip] I think I think I knocked out the rosary… I find it very meditative being on the bike … when you go on long trips … you're on that bike for hours. You process stuff, you can work things out … I'll come back and I'll have it all sorted.

Not all Gen X women are using the Rosary and Marian devotion as to reinforce the dichotomous magisterial ideals of motherhood and virginity. Some participants in this study use Marian pieties as a type of interpretive adjustment to cope with and subvert magisterial norms. This aligns with other studies of contemporary Mariology that have found Catholic women are using Mary and Marian devotion either to deal with limitations they face in patriarchal societies (Abraham 2019) or to liberate themselves from oppressive *kyriarchal* theologies and ideologies (Althaus-Reid & Isherwood 2007; Calderón Muñoz 2014).

Clare Monagle (2020) argues that in the Catholic tradition, Mary has been used as a shaming technology, to silence women and efface their embodied lives. A number of participants in this study, however, speak of Mary using interpretive adjustments that subvert the magisterial notion of passive femininity. Instead, they reconceptualise Mary as an assertive woman of faith. For instance, Marline, when speaking of Mary, does not tell of a woman with eyes downcast, obedient, and subservient but a woman with agency, power, and deep faith. She conveys a heartfelt 'female connection' with Mary and thinks of her as a 'a sisterhood role model' who 'gives us a practical link to Christ'. Bernadette visualises Mary as a simple but faithful woman with sexuality and agency:

> Mary said yes. She was young and inexperienced, and she said yes when the angel came and said, "Guess what it's you!" She didn't say "Oh no it's not going to work out for me – go and ask the girl next door". She didn't do any of that. She said yes because of her faith in God. Her pure, simple faith that God would look after her and it would be the right thing. That is the Mary that I see in that virgin. I don't dwell on the fact that virgin means hasn't been defiled yet. You know I don't view that because I'm pretty sure she

> and Joseph were a bit keen. You know – I am sorry Mary but I am probably thinking they got a bit hot and heavy – they were a young couple, and it was happening.

As these Gen X women enact the Rosary and other forms of Marian devotion, they repeat and reiterate yet refuse to embody magisterial ideals.

The process of enacting Marian technologies of Catholicism in conjunction with interpretive adjustments creates discontinuities and the possibility for the emergence of unforeseen deviations. In the process of an enactment, other cultural conventions can intervene, and the enactment can miss, fall short, or deviate from its apparent aim, producing something quite different than its initial purpose. During her interview, Grace recounts what she recalls as a 'spiritual experience':

> After I left school, I felt there was a period of time of … deep searching for something and I started to visit a local monastery and joining the evening prayer. And one of the things I started to do was pray the Rosary privately. And it was a beautiful, contemplative experience for me. It wasn't a fast praying at the Rosary… I had a beautiful experience. … I was in this chapel after evening prayer … And I went to confession for the first time in years. … And I came out and … the priest there asked me to, as my penance to pray, either three Hail Marys and Our Father or something, that traditional thing. And as I started praying, Hail Mary… I had this overwhelming experience that took my breath away of this feminine, powerful feminine presence. And I knew that to be Mary. … Since then, a lot of the Marian stuff has never appealed to me because that experience that I had was quite different to the meek and mild Mary that gets presented. What I felt was very powerful and feminine … a fierce compassion … There are elements of Buddhism that have goddesses like that. And it often takes my attention because I because of this experience.

Grace speaks of how her 'experience of that powerful woman' has totally altered her understanding of the divine. Gemma, now disaffiliated, recounts a very different experience. She remembers praying the Rosary as a child with Josephite nuns. When asked whether she prays the Rosary as an adult, she laughs and recounts the following:

> It's funny. I did a beginner's running program at the beginning of the year and one time we were lengthening the length of time we are running, and I was finding it really hard to keep focused. A couple of times I said the Rosary in my head because it was a meditative way to keep counting and keep going.

Later, when Gemma spoke of Mary, it was not of some magisterial paradigm of bridal virginity, she states: 'Mary, I think she must have been a lot more gung-ho than we give her credit for in terms of raising children by herself and raising Jesus to be as egalitarian'. While all the women in this study have undergone formal and informal formation in official Catholicism, what is distinctive about the group that have adapted and re-told Mary's story is their self-identification with feminism.

For the cohort who pray the Rosary but do not identify as feminist, Mariology and Marian devotion are still a source of female empowerment. These women recount how Marian devotion supports them in their everyday lives. For instance, Veronica claims that feminism had 'gone overboard', causing the family unit to suffer. She is a weekly Mass attendee, regularly prays the Rosary in a group, and has visited the tomb of Saint Catherine Labouré.[18] In her interview, when asked if there was a key moment in her journey as a Catholic, Veronica describes how her dedication to Mary is strongly linked to her heritage; it is part of her. She says the following:

> Well, it wasn't a decision about whether I should go or stay … this is part of me … I wear Mary's Miraculous medal that I bought when I was [at school] and was working locally … I didn't really know the significance of that until I went where Catherine Labouré's body was … it was so important to me to go and see it … And that was after I'd been wearing this medal for ten years … We have a family tree that goes back to the 1200s in [Europe] … And there's all these other things that have religious significance. I've got a Mary's portable altar that my grandmother gave me.

[18] Saint Catherine Labouré (1806-1876) experienced Marian apparitions that coincided with worldwide disasters. She is understood to have been ordered by Mary to create a medal, known as the "Miraculous Medal". Her body lays incorrupt in the convent chapel at rue du Bac, Paris (Farmer 2011).

Veronica's Marian devotion is inter-generational, and she draws strength from the faith that she understands as her heritage. Eleanor regularly prays the Rosary in the car and reveals, 'I've got the Rosary on my phone – I've got an app and I can just play it as I drive'. For Eleanor, the Rosary is a spiritual weapon; she recounts: 'the Rosary is like your spiritual sword'. The Rosary provides Eleanor with fortitude and courage as she deals with the difficulties in her day-to-day life. Currently estranged from her husband, Eleanor blames feminism for the breakdown of family life and uses Marian devotion as a source of strength to support her in motherhood.

The Rosary and Mariology make up an important part of Prudence's personal devotional life; she describes Mary, who she calls 'our lady', as the 'quintessence of femininity'. She draws strength and inspiration from the way that Mary, who is both virgin and mother, embodies and unites the different aspects of 'femaleness' and 'womanhood' in her person. When I asked Prudence whether she identifies as a feminist, she claims the following:

> I am not a left-wing social agenda feminist, man is bad, woman is good dialectic Marxist etcetera, etcetera type of feminist. Okay – no way. There is no way I endorse any of the what has become so entangled with at best a sycophantic martyr hero persona now – it is sick … The way in which it has diminished the male role is appalling.

Prudence's views about feminism align with the group of Catholic women who claim to accept the papal discourse of New Feminism. The movement of New Feminism rose to prominence in the mid-1990s in response to the teachings of John Paul II around womanhood (Beattie 2006). Far from being convinced by feminism's social change agendas, New Feminism is openly opposed to feminist claims for inequality based purely on gender. Instead, by promoting "feminine genius" theology and recognising some qualities as inherently feminine, New Feminism support idealised gender constructions.

Women who align themselves with New Feminism do claim some affinity with the women's liberation movement but avoid any sweeping claims of margination based on femaleness (Beattie 2006). Prudence articulates this view when she explains why rejects feminism:

> Look, I rebelled against my mother's 1950 concept of wife and mother … there is no way in which I identify with that concept of femaleness either. But I think this whole thing of feminism – it's just rubbish – it is just a failure to appreciate personhood … Certainly, there was an encouragement of careers and all that sort of stuff and that was wonderful – yes we have the feminist movement I suppose to thank for that but … I think it's very dangerous to blanket things for all times and places and for all circumstances … To put a fence around a particular group that is female … the same thing could be said for you know Irish Catholic males in the 1920s or men who were not Freemasons. It goes on and on and on the same problems with regard to education and rights and everything.

Prudence and other women who accept and live by the discourse of New Feminism are an important part of the cohort of Gen X Catholic women. They tend to use Marian pieties as technologies of Catholicism to support rather than subvert *kyriarchal* ideals.

Since the papacy of John Paul II, the magisterium has been openly critical of feminism. In 1995, John Paul II pronounced:

> In transforming culture so that it supports life, women occupy a place, in thought and action, which is unique and decisive. It depends on them to promote a "new feminism" which rejects the temptation of imitating models of "male domination," in order to acknowledge and affirm the true genius of women in every aspect of the life of society, and overcome all discrimination, violence and exploitation. (EV, para. 99)

Francis more recently exclaimed: 'in the end every feminism ends up being a machismo with a skirt' (as cited in Vatican News 2019). Magisterial commentary on feminism shifts the blame for gender inequality away from men and *kyriarchal* power

structures towards feminism without any attempt to understand and unmask the dynamics of power in Catholicism (Beattie 2006). Sara Ahmed (2017) claims that when feminists bring up the marginalisation of women to those who don't have a sense of such oppression, they bring it into existence. Thus, when the marginalisation of women in Catholicism becomes more tangible and easily communicated, feminists are blamed.

The treatment of feminism by the magisterium and the divide it creates between women functions to reinforce the subordination of women. Often a feminist is misunderstood as making a point 'to get in the way of the happiness of others, because of her own unhappiness' (Ahmed 2017, p. 37). Agatha, who identifies with New Feminism, asserts:

> I believe now that we need to have the movement of true feminism. We've had that radical feminism for far too long … I think is perverted and that the feminism that came out of that was in terms of woman power. I think we do have power. I don't have to be at war with men … what feminism is doing which is, is despicable. It's like, they've positioned us against one another … that's not how it's meant to be. It's exactly the equality with men. I'm sure there are areas … I know that we get paid differently … But then at the same time, I appreciate why the man getting more because he's often the breadwinner … the mother can be at home to rear children. Because if both were out there, well, good luck to the children … I think too many women … want to fetch a career. It's all good. But what I'm saying is that this is at the expense of something.

Happiness or a threat of the pain of unhappiness are often used to compel women to perform in a certain way (Ahmed 2017; Manne 2018). The mode and system of power that comes to mind is that of the Foucauldian panopticon whereby a process of scrutiny or surveillance is enacted within rewards for conformity and penalties for non-compliance (Foucault 1977). The process of scrutiny produces a sense of being the "other" and othering others. Boundaries are thus formed between women who conceive they are living out magisterial ideals of New Feminism and those who don't. Highly educated and

articulate, Agatha, Prudence, and women who align themselves with New Feminism, however, should not be dismissed as victims of oppressive *kyriarchal* discourse. Women who invest in the hegemonic construction of Catholic womanhood associated with New Feminism perceive or achieve a level of satisfaction, pay-off, or reward for their compliance.

Agatha

Agatha came to Australia as a refugee. After arriving as an infant, she grew up and was educated in Australia. Now married to a devout Catholic, Agatha has a young child. She describes her Catholic identity principally by drawing on elements of official Catholicism and expresses an absolute commitment to the magisterium and its doctrine, which she asserts is 'just bulletproof'. When asked about her involvement in the Catholic Church, Agatha speaks of attending Mass on Sundays and during the week and notes that she participates in the sacrament of Reconciliation several times a month.

Growing up in a multi-generational migrant household, Agatha describes Catholicism as something that was embedded into her family culture. She attended Catholic schools but did not attend Mass weekly as a child. Her frequent Mass attendance is a relatively recent practice.

After a visit to the Marian apparition site at Medjugorje, Agatha's faith underwent a transformation. She says the following:

> I went with a friend … I had never even known of Medjugorje. I had never even heard of it, but my heart was open to it … It was so prayerful – every day the Rosary, the Stations of the Cross. I started to learn the beauty of my faith and that prayer was just not rote – it is not just petitions – it is like it is your being … there was a lot of like healing because of the prayer.

In her interview, she uses the term 'conversion' to describe her transition after her trip to Medjugorje from (in her words) 'broken' and a 'cafeteria Catholic' to knowing the 'Truth'. When I asked what "Truth" was, Agatha notes: 'Truth is what God tells me. The Truth is through the teaching of the Church – the

magisterium'. For Agatha, living a Catholic life is all-encompassing, it is about doing things the 'right way' and involves being a 'fighter for the faith'. She maintains that Sunday Mass attendance must be more than just turning up; she states, 'I think a lot of people there are just pew sitters'.

Agatha attends regular weekday Masses at her workplace and on Sundays attends a Tridentine (Latin) Mass at a Catholic parish across the city from where she lives. Describing her experience of attending Sunday Mass, she notes the following:

> So, I went … I felt like your soul is actually lifted in prayer. Whereas in the *Novus*[19] I just feel like it is a little mechanical and it is hard to concentrate because there are some people who just do a curtsy to the tabernacle. And it is just like "Oh my God! Can you just get down all the way on your knees?" and things like this. I'd think "Why am I here now? I'm just giving myself head spins here and I just should be like praying".

Generally, Agatha participates in Reconciliation before attending Mass as she prefers to be in what she describes as 'a safe state of grace' before she receives the Eucharist. Agatha's commitment to the ongoing performance of official Catholic sacramental rituals and practices is guided by her spiritual conversion. Her Mass attendance and traditional parish provide a plausibility structure to support her links with official Catholicism.

7.8 Agency: Submission or subversion?

Gen X women who pursue the practices and ideals of official Catholicism occupy an uncomfortable space in feminist scholarship. Adherence to *kyriarchal* magisterial traditions and technologies of Catholicism, such as Mass attendance and Marian pieties, which have historically accorded women a subordinate status in Catholicism, are widely recognised as supporting the marginalisation of women (McPhillips 2006; Pope 1985; Ross 2013; Warner 2016). In a similar way, women's refusal to comply with norms of recognisability is understood as women's agency being produced in the disruption of and

[19] *Novus Ordo* literally translated means "new order". It is a term for the ordinary form of the Mass, which was propagated by Paul VI in 1970 in conformity with the decrees of Vatican Council II (TC, art. 1).

opposition to *kyriarchal* authority (Schüssler Fiorenza 2016). The reality for Gen X women is more nuanced.

Any position within a discursive system of power must recognise its own complicity (Foucault 1980). Even what might be understood as liberatory practices, counter, or external to oppressive power can also participate in the production of potential hegemonies (McClintock Fulkerson 1994). Disciplinary power works because it produces and induces happiness and satisfaction, shapes knowledge, and produces discourse (Ahmed 2010; Foucault 1980). This type of power is insidious as it shapes self-perceptions, cognitions, and preferences, in a way that means women do not see or imagine alternatives, or they interpret power dynamics as natural and unchangeable, or ordained and beneficial (Abraham 2019).

In her study of the urban women's mosque movement in Cairo, Egypt, Saba Mahmood (2012) argues that agency should be understood as modalities of action rather than simply resistance or opposition to social and regulatory norms. For some Gen X women, compliance with *kyriarchal* technologies of Catholicism and magisterial norms is empowering and self-determining. What might be viewed as passivity or docility, can actually be understood as a form of agency; a type of interpretive adjustment that actively reproduces *kyriarchal* systems. Indeed, the way that Agatha understands, inhabits, and self-constructs her Catholic identity is clearly conveyed as positive. In her interview, she expresses a sense of satisfaction and contentment regarding her interaction with Catholicism. In a similar manner, Prudence speaks of the beauty and deep meaning she finds in Mariology, the Mass, and prayer. Interpretive adjustments that reproduce *kyriarchal* systems, however, are not a type of freedom but rather a capacity for action, created and enabled by a multifaceted fusion of resistances and subordinations.

In an examination of neo-liberalism and evangelicalism in the US, Nancy Fraser (2005) argues that conservative evangelicalism provides a Foucauldian care-of-self technology that conveys meaning and a way for women to deal with instability and insecurity that accompanies neo-liberalism. In a similar way, enacting magisterial norms as technologies of Catholicism provides meaning and stability for some Gen X women in neo-liberal Australia. This kind of interpretive adjustment does not belong solely to the women but is a product of the historically contingent and authoritative discourse within which they are located. Mahmood (2012) explains:

> The women are summoned to recognise themselves in terms of the virtues and codes of these traditions, and they measure themselves against the ideals furbished by these traditions; in this important sense, the individual is contingently made possible by the discursive logic of the ethical traditions she enacts. (p. 32)

Women reproducing male meanings and definitions about themselves, or other women can be interpreted as partaking in the "hegemonic idiom", or a necessary standard or criteria for preserving the established order (Abraham 2019). Women appropriating the standards of *kyriarchal* systems, however:

> does not signal necessarily a reversal of the hierarchy or power base; it is more likely a reflection of women's participation in, upholding of and negotiation within the patriarchal status quo. (Abraham 2019, p. 79)

Practising regulatory ideals and norms as technologies of Catholicism or interpretive adjustments have accompanying intrinsic rewards that enable Gen X Catholic women to construct themselves as being agentic and confident.

Wendy Holloway's (1984) notion of "investment" is useful here in explaining how and why women use and enact certain technologies of Catholicism and make various interpretive adjustments while negotiating recognisability. In a critique of Foucault's understanding that power subjugates equally for men and women, Holloway (1984)

proposed that in societies where there are competing, concurrent discourses on masculinity and femininity, an individual's perception, real or otherwise, of satisfaction, pay-off, or reward will influence their support of a certain discourse. For instance, in Catholicism, women using certain technologies of Catholicism to embody a set of magisterial norms is not just a way of ratifying an official Catholic identity, it is also a way for the magisterium to constrain who is recognisable. Women who invest in and comply with the hegemonic construction of Catholic womanhood, as acknowledged by the magisterium, receive some personal gain by being perceived and recognised as a "good Catholic woman". Catholic women who fail to enact the *kyriarchal* norms of Catholic womanhood can struggle for recognisability, a situation that can open women to the condition of precarity.

Term used to describe identity	**Definition**
Cafeteria Catholic	People who self-identify as Catholic but "pick and choose" both the elements of Catholicism they participate in and what Catholic teachings they adhere to.
Cradle Catholics	People born into a Catholic family and typically baptised as an infant. Gives no clear indication of current level of participation.
Cultural Catholics	People who self-identify as Catholic who may or may not attend Mass or be committed to meeting official Sacramental obligations and living out Catholic teachings in their daily life. For "cultural Catholics" Mass attendance, Catholic teachings and pieties were part of their early socialisation and family ethos or culture.
Done	People who once self-identified as Catholic but no longer do so. The identifier "Done" implies that the individual has disassociated themselves from official Catholicism and its teachings and practices. A "Done" may or may not still believe in God or a higher power and enact Catholic pieties.

Embedded	People who self-identify as Catholic who may or may not attend Mass or be committed to meeting official Sacramental obligations and living out Catholic teachings in their daily life. Similar to "cultural Catholics", Mass attendance, Catholic teachings and pieties were part of the early socialisation and family ethos or culture of Catholics who describe their identity as embedded. However, Catholics who describe their identity as embedded, note that being Catholic is a central or core part of their identity. Often, they express that being Catholic is so much part of who they are that they cannot cast it off.
Good Catholics	People who self-identify as Catholic who may or may not attend Mass or be committed to meeting official Sacramental obligations and living out Catholic teachings in their daily life. The focus for "good Catholics" is recognition by authority figures such as priests or teachers. 'It means they're either given money, their family's given money or [the priest] has been over to dinner at their house or they do turn up for reconciliation or they do sit up the front of the church' (Billie).
Lapsed Catholics	People who self-identify as Catholic but no longer attend Mass or participate regularly in Catholic Sacraments
None	People who have no religious affiliation. In the Australian census a "none" is a person who nominates their religious affiliation as "No religion".
Pew sitters	People who self-identify as Catholic and are regular Mass attenders. In contrast to "proper" or "good" Catholics, however, "Pew sitters" are judged as just attending or turning up at Mass without living a pious lifestyle that fully aligns with Catholic teaching and involves strict adherence to official Sacramental obligations.
Proper Catholics	People who self-identify as Catholic, attend Mass weekly, are committed to meet official Sacramental obligations, and live out Catholic teachings in their daily life.
Submarine Catholics	People who self-identify as Catholic but only attend Mass at Christmas and Easter.

Sunday Catholic	People who self-identify as Catholic and are regular Mass attenders. They may be "proper" or "good" Catholics, or "Pew sitters". "Sunday Catholics" have no involvement with Catholic Church structures or organisations beyond their Mass attendance. They tend not to be involved in parish ministries, governance, social activities, or small groups.
Trad or Trads	People who self-identify as Catholic and participate in a more traditional or pre-Vatican II form of Catholicism. Will often attend Tridentine (Latin) Mass. Believe women, when attending Mass, should wear long dresses and be veiled in a mantilla (a covering of their hair and shoulders) or wear a hat. 'I don't know whether you've heard the expression "trads". Short for traditional but it is said in a way that it's condescending … ["trads"] are so rigid' (Agatha).

Table 3: Identity labels used by participants

Status as "good Catholic woman", however, is only achieved while the iteration of official norms, especially Mass attendance, continues. A woman who stops attending Mass or meeting other prescribed obligations risks precarity and their recognisable status. In the pursuit and exaltation of the symbolic ideal of regular Mass attendance and other magisterial norms, Catholic women can internalise *kyriarchal* discourses and exercise a form of punitive scrutiny, towards themselves and other women. For instance, Agatha names and describes herself and other Catholics using emotionally loaded terms. She uses the labels "trad", "cafeteria Catholic", "pew sitters", "cultural Catholic", and "cradle Catholic". These speech acts function to confirm her own adherence to the magisterium's regulatory norms of practice and act as a form of judgement and classification. Through speech, Agatha is constructing and distinguishing herself via the "rules". She uses these emotionally loaded expressions not just to place a boundary between herself and other women, but also between her pre-conversion self and current self.

In addition to Agatha, other participants in this study use loaded terms and phrases to describe and monitor themselves and others (see Table 3). Herein, self-regulation and

self-expectation generate compliant subjects. Women actively reproduce the hegemonic discourse of Catholicism without being coerced into doing so. In a similar way to Agatha, Billie describes herself as a "cradle Catholic"; Eleanor and Mari use the term "lapsed Catholic"; Martha labels herself a "proper Catholic"; Patricia, Miriam, Libby, Mari, and Frances identify themselves as "culturally Catholic". Bernadette, a weekly Mass attendee, describes this sentiment when she notes the following:

> You can't just say that you are part of it, you actually have to be part of it. So "submarine Catholics" are those people who just rise to the surface for Christmas and Easter. Do you like that term? Have you heard that term before? … You know it's not truly being a member of the Church.

Some participants in this study use these terms to differentiate themselves from the other Catholic women. For others, the expressions are a way to position themselves within official Catholic discourse.

Luanne

Luanne grew up in a large Catholic family and attended Mass every Sunday during her childhood. She recalls a 'very deep and profound conversion experience' with the Holy Spirit when she received the sacrament of confirmation. She says the following:

> I remember going up to the priest and him laying his hands and using the oil and … I remember feeling like this is what it must feel like to be filled with the Holy Spirit. I was just so in awe … All of a sudden, I really loved going [to Mass] … I wanted to be involved.

After Luanne received the sacrament of Confirmation, she began to participate more fully in her parish community. She was actively involved in the youth movement, *Antioch*, until her mid-twenties.

Through her involvement in *Antioch*, Luanne met the man who would be her husband, and became deeply involved in her parish community. However, when her

marriage broke down her position in her parish became ‘tenuous’. Luanne recounts, ‘[the parish] just became such a difficult place for me to spend time’.

Describing the loss and sense of failure she felt as the result of her marriage failing, Luanne says, ‘I just had no idea how to get my head around that and what that would mean for me … I genuinely felt that I wouldn't belong in the church … I felt like a deep sense of failure as a person’.

Eventually, through the process of her marriage breakdown and after ‘doing a lot of soul searching’ Luanne came out as a lesbian. She describes the process of coming out as a ‘huge time of challenge and trauma’. Abandoned by her parish community, she sought psychiatric care. She explains the following:

> I literally lost all of my friends when I came out … It was a really hard time and so in some ways – I haven't felt comfortable enough to really be my full self in a church setting or in a parish setting so I haven't really openly or actively tried to seek out a parish since then.

Luanne now attends Mass infrequently. Despite her lack of Mass attendance, she claims, ‘I am deeply drawn to the Eucharist’. Yet, Luanne’s participation in Catholicism is now mainly through her work and in her ‘day-to-day life’. She elucidates:

> My view is that my life is prayer, so I keep a mindful approach to my relationship with God in terms of how I interact with others, the words that I use, my intentions. In the way that I speak and behave and develop relationships, particularly in my work. I do sort of meditate … God for me is probably someone, something that is a like an ever presence that I carry within myself but also, I am aware of around me on a day-to-day basis … it is about the people that I meet and spend time with and the blessings that I have in my day-to-day life.

Catholic teachings around gender and sexuality have had a profound effect on Luanne’s sense of self. She recounts the following:

> I felt such a deep personal connection with God … but also, I was deeply aware of Church doctrines that said these people are not what God wants for the world. And I didn't know how to make that work in my head … There is no dialogue and certainly in homilies there is still some really explicit homophobic and really explicit speaking about marriage and the sanctity of marriage and it being between

> a man and a woman … things that makes it really hard for someone like me to really see past that. … I just got to a point where I just I can't deal with it … I felt like it was just this constant cycle of "How do I reconcile all this?"

7.9 "How do I reconcile all this?": Navigating Catholic teachings around gender and sexuality

Recognisability in Catholicism is more complex than just reiterating magisterial technologies of Catholicism. In Chapter Three, I argued that formation in Catholic teachings and doctrine relating to sex and gender are a fundamental part of most Gen X women's socialisation. During their interviews, many study participants refer to the teachings that purport sex should only occur within a conjugal union between a man and a woman where there is an openness to life (CCC, paras. 2360-70). A few participants in this study who had more devout upbringings or whose life experiences had generally aligned with doctrinal obligations, expressed satisfaction with these teachings. When asked about her satisfaction with the doctrine and teachings of the Church, Josephine says the following:

> I'm pretty satisfied … I've always been of the mindset that each individual has a free will to choose their own – make their own decisions on things like that … It is good to have those as guidelines for people to follow, and you know, you might make mistakes not following that or whatever, but that's all part of life. I think it's just – I can't say I've known many people that have been able to live by those things, and maybe it should be a bit more flexible, but that's not up to me to change.

Most participants in this study, however, voice a high level of dissatisfaction with these teachings that prohibit the use of artificial methods of contraception, reject homosexuality, disallow sex outside marriage, and deny women access to methods of assisted reproduction including IVF. For instance, Lucy, a regular Mass attendee, speaks

of really questioning whether she retains a Catholic identity. When asked what brings her identity into question, she reflects:

> The abuse, the position on same-sex marriage – I just don't think that's what Jesus would have really been preaching … the hierarchical power structure … the fact that the Church seems to be becoming more conservative when really when I think if we want to embrace more people, we need to be a little more human.

Even if they understand and accept teachings around sex and reproduction, many participants do not allow them to regulate their private lives. Instead, they use interpretive adjustments to subvert rules and injunctions set out in the catechism. This becomes very clear as women recount their life stories. For example, Frances' children were donor conceived, Marline, Nora, Elizabeth, and Miriam were pregnant when they married, Grace and Luanne identify as lesbians, and Chloe, Antonia, and Monica used IVF in an attempt to have children. Miriam muses:

> I find a lot of judgment from people that are quite religious … making you feel guilty … I was pregnant before I was married … I believe if you love someone it's going to happen. I don't think that you have to go and do things in a certain order. You just live your life and just try and be as happy as you can and be nice to people. That's all it comes down to.

Anthony Fisher (2021a), Archbishop of Sydney, clearly articulates the magisterial view that any rejection of teachings on sexuality and gender comes from a 'contemporary crisis of morals' (n.p.). He says the following:

> Of course, there are diverse opinions on what some have called the "below the belt issues", opinions ardently held and forcefully articulated. We know that many people make decisions about these matters from a place of desperation, ignorance, passion or hurt, that can mean reduced responsibility and poor decision-making (Fisher 2021a, n.p.).

Yet, in the Gen X women interviewed for this study speak coherently and ethically as they critique teachings. For instance, Mari contests the prohibition of artificial birth control:

> Sex has always been managed in some form and more recently we've had medicine to help us control it … [the teaching] seems to be awfully caught up with the chemistry or the condom or women's bodies … it's always about controlling women's bodies. But if you really thought about it, we have always controlled contraception. We just have new tools now and everyone is worried about the tools - the actual process of it has always been a part of life.

Patricia notes, 'I just think [the Catholic hierarchy] should just get with the program. I mean everybody's doing it. People don't want to have twenty babies'. Monica asserts:

> Birth control. That's the most ridiculous thing the Church has ever, ever come out with, not allowing women to use birth control. It's just ridiculous. It's hideous. It can lead to all sorts of other issues and unwanted pregnancies, financial tension, possibly even cases of domestic violence … it's wrong.

For Martha, reproductive choice and sexuality are a matter between a person and God:

> When I talk to women who come to me and ask me questions [about reproductive services], I always talk to about having an informed conscience and making the decision that they know right for them, about discerning it with God and sort of cutting the middleman-church out.

During their interviews, several participants in this study express how they feel connected to the biblical account of the teachings of Jesus as distinct from magisterial teachings. For instance, Antonia reflects:

> They are all man-made decisions that have nothing to do with the teachings of Christ or the way that Jesus lived. So, I'm not going to support that. Because it is man-made and not coming from the faith … That's where all that starts falling apart.

Marline asserts:

> I have a deep faith in the teachings and the principles that come out of the Bible … I see the church as a body of people who go about doing different things. I see the institution as something separate and as hierarchical. I don't feel comfortable having some man tell me what I should and shouldn't do and what I should and shouldn't think.

Ava, who is now disaffiliated, says it is the Catholic Church rather than the teachings she has abandoned:

> Jesus' teachings that I was taught have a huge part to do with who I am, but … by the time I was becoming an adult, in my late teens, I already was, like, "Oh, there's a lot here that I don't agree with" … I was pulling away from the Church … I took on board all the teachings about: healing the sick, feeding the poor, that we have a responsibility to people who are less fortunate … I took them on as something that was a very worthy thing to believe in.

In official Catholicism, feminism has been associated with doctrinal controversy around issues such reproductive services and sexuality (Leming 2007). Overall, however, there was little correspondence between participants use of interpretive adjustments to subvert Catholic teachings related to sexuality and reproduction and their identification with feminism. Instead, it was the teachings and their failure to take account of "real life" and the diversity of women's experiences that was problematised.

The failure of Catholic teachings and pastoral practices to account for the reality and breadth of diversity of human relationships is highly problematic for many Gen X women. Foucault (1982) argues that 'from the moment one begins to be unable, any longer, to think things as one usually thinks them, transformation becomes simultaneously very urgent, very difficult, and altogether possible' (p. 34). Within official Catholicism, transformation can often seem impossible. For example, Grace says the following:

> I thought God would leave my life … because I thought God will become absent because of my choice to enter into [a lesbian] relationship. And [God] never did – [God] never left me at all. My relationship with God didn't change. And I listened really hard for a long time for that, but it never happened. So since then, I've kind of started to refer to myself as a lesbian Christian, but I've had to be very careful about where I say that.

When a participant's milieu does not include knowledge of others who have breached the gendered and sexual framework of teachings generated by the magisterium, they can find life conflictive and teachings around gender and sexuality difficult to reconcile. For instance, Regina recalls how she felt when her husband left her, and they divorced:

> When I divorced, I was the only person in my entire family – the first person ever to have been through a divorce. My Mum was the only female out of two sisters and a mother that drove [a car] – none of them worked. There was, I don't know, a quite old-fashioned sort of view of a female's role, I guess.

Luanne recounts her struggle when she came out as a lesbian:

> When there are people in positions of authority and power and knowledge like your priests and your religious that speak in that way … I didn't know who I was as this young woman to challenge that.

In living her own narrative truth as a lesbian woman, consciously deconstructing liturgical language, scripture, *praxis*, and her understanding of God, Luanne has refashioned and relocated her self-understanding and *praxis*. She says the following:

> The Catechism is really strong around the importance of the person's individual conscience, and that God gave people free will and the ability to make decisions for themselves and others. And that reigns over anything else the Church has put in place if you. If you believe that what you are – who you are – is in good faith – in deep relationship with God, is what is right for you, then that's all that matters. And it is causing no harm to anyone else, then that's all that matters.

When Gen X women use interpretive adjustments in this way to make sense of both their hopes and desires and the constraints imposed by Catholic teachings, they do so within a matrix of power and resistance.

Religious teachings, symbols, and rituals can have a deep impact on an individual's social and political reality. They can function at a deep or unconscious psychological level even after the teaching, symbolism, or ritual has consciously rejected (Christ 1992). For some participants, remaining Catholic is not possible. Yet, as Monica Dux (2021) testifies in her memoir *Lapsed*, leaving Catholicism can be complicated and messy especially given the powerful formative experience of being raised in a faith community. Antonia describes her disaffiliation as a process of discernment and interpretive adjustments that lasted years. As she retells her story during her interview, she expresses a deep sorrow apparent in her manner, tone, and words. Antonia says about her disaffiliation, 'I was really quite depressed … This whole religion that I have identified with all my life is something that I now can't support or believe in'.

Not all participants who have disaffiliated from Catholicism struggle in the same way as Antonia. For example, Skye, speaking of the moment when she decided to disaffiliate from Catholicism, recalls the following:

> I remember it to this day. I would have been maybe 24 or 25. And, the priest was giving his sermon, and I can't tell you what the sermon was about, but I remember thinking … "You have no idea what's really going on. This is just rubbish," and I never went back.

Skye remembers a clear moment where nothing made sense. Never having had a strong connection with Catholicism her disaffiliation is simple, clear-cut, and without emotion. When asked about her belief in God, Skye says, 'I would say no. No. I don't think there is a heaven, a hell, someone that's doing all this stuff'. Ava never practised Catholicism or attended Mass as an adult. She says, 'Once I left home, [my church

attendance] kind of – it petered out over a couple of years and then it's been pretty much non-existent since then'.

Throughout a lifetime, individuals take on a series of different roles and identities, any number of which, at any given time, might be operative or relevant. When a person disassociates themselves from a particular identity or role, the process of withdrawal can vary considerably dependent on the salience of the identity and value system (Ebaugh 1988). When asked about Catholic teachings, Skye claims they never really influenced the way she has lived her life. She notes:

> I guess I'm aware of them culturally, but I never felt that I had to follow them. They were more like this is the guidelines the Church has, but it's different in the rest of society. So, I didn't stick to them. I didn't have a problem breaking them … I saw them as the Church beliefs and not necessarily society's beliefs. They necessarily weren't for me … it's really just a group of men holding on to power and using myths to control.

With little value attached to their identities as a Catholic woman, Skye and Ava viewed their disaffiliation as inevitable and spoke of it without emotion.

Violet

Violet attends Mass most weekends with her Catholic husband and children. Her children are altar servers, her husband is on the parish council, and she reads regularly at Mass and describes her priest as 'a friend'. Violet prays and meditates every day. She is heavily involved in her parish community, often organising meals or prayers for other parishioners in times of crisis.

Violet grew up in a Catholic family, went to Catholic schools, attended a Catholic university and, before children, worked in a Catholic institution. When speaking of her childhood she recalls, 'the sacraments were a big thing… they were a big deal all the grandparents would come and all the aunties and uncles'.

Violet does not remember a time when she hasn't regularly attended Mass. She says the following:

> [During university and while working] I wasn't involved in the Church community so much, but I always went to Mass. Just not every week. It wasn't like conscious "I'm not going to go this week" – it was if something was on.

Yet, for Violet, being Catholic is about a lot more than simply Mass attendance. She reflects:

> It doesn't matter, just because you go to Mass, it doesn't make you a good person. You can do a lot of good for people and that's just as important … I work in a refugee centre. I just rang and said, "how can I get involved?" … It is not a Catholic centre; I don't think it is religious. I have never asked.

Violet cites her Mum and Dad as the biggest influence on her life and Catholic practice. She muses, 'I think they just kind of led by example'. Violet believes most of the Catholic teachings around gender and sexuality are 'a bit out-dated'. Her grandmother was an anti-abortion activist, yet she asserts that she disagrees with Catholic teachings on abortion, women priests, homosexuality, sex before marriage, and priestly celibacy. She declares:

> There should be married priests. It is the most unnatural thing in the world. Half the priests have girlfriends or the ones that I know do. And so, they should have. Most of the ones I know have always had a partner. I think that is perfectly natural.

When asked if there were any key moments where she decided to stay involved in Catholicism, Violet explains the following:

> I question being a practicing Catholic more now than I ever did … I don't battle with it but certainly my husband and I have had discussions about it. I don't know whether it is a bit as a blind faith, and you just go along and you know you just believe everything. But the Royal Commission sort of knocked us around a bit … I was "what in the hell am I getting my kids involved in? I've believed this all my life" but we've had massive family discussions about it and that sort of cleared it a bit for me by saying "put the Catholic Church to the side and have your relationship with God".

7.10 “What in the hell am I getting my kids involved in?”: CPCSA

The crisis of CPCSA in the Catholic Church and the RCIRCSA are significant moments of discontinuity in the genealogy of Gen X women in Australia. Just like so many of my participants, I began my research with significant insider knowledge of CPCSA within the Catholic Church in Australia. Not unlike Violet, Marline, Billie, and some of the other participants in this study, I know survivors as friends and colleagues and have firsthand experiences with priests who are perpetrators. The notorious paedophile Vincent Ryan (Ferguson 2020) was my parish priest as a teenager. I was sidelined as an adult for reporting clergy misconduct.

Cultural trauma ‘refers to the impact of serious and awful events, which affect community well-being, group identity, social cohesion, and group safety’ (McPhillips 2017c, pp. 134-5). At the time of interviews, the RCIRCSA had published its final reports and there were accusations of abuse directed at clerics appearing frequently in media reports. Many of the interview narratives reveal a high level of cultural trauma. Several participants in this study mentioned high profile clerics that had been accused of abuse or cover-ups. Violet speaks of a relative who was convicted of abusing children. She notes the following:

> [A relative] he was involved in it. And it's really taken the wind out of our sails a bit … The sexual abuse crisis has impacted me directly. Not me as a victim. I have family that was a perpetrator, but you know I'm not convinced he was. And some of the kids that we went to school with … they've made it up so they can get payouts … It was tough and people would ring, or I would see people and they’d go “Oh my God! Did you hear!” … So that that threw me, but you know some of the harrowing stories you hear. There were definitely perpetrators.

Kim states:

> I can sort of sit on the periphery, but it is so harmful and soul-destroying to me. It takes me about a week to get over some of the stories I'm seeing in the media.

During interviews, study participants explain the different technologies and interpretive adjustments they employ to try and make sense of media accounts and personal stories of abuse from family and friends. For example, Violet recalls having long discussions with her husband in an attempt to reconcile her faith, her Catholic identity, and the horrendous crimes perpetrated in the Catholic Church.

Several participants in this study use evasive language as a type of interpretive adjustment to avoid naming and to mitigate and/or extenuate the seriousness of the actions of priests. For example, Audrey says the following:

> There was one priest – I would never say he did anything. He used to take a bunch of girls away on camp … We did that a couple of times … I was a leader on that once because it was a fun thing to do in the holidays … He was really lovely and I remember one incident where he might have inappropriately snapped the swimming cossie of one of the other girls, and us all kind of laughing about it and thinking that it was a bit – a little bit sleazy, but I never heard anything else … In retrospect, I look back and go that's a pretty odd thing to do, to take sixteen 13-year-olds and four 17-year-olds away to the country camping … It wasn't a bra strap; it was like the hip … She'd come out the pool or the river or wherever we were… But I remember us all kind of, you know, going, "Oh, we better be careful", or something like that. Yes, borderline appropriate.

Several participants begin accounts of stories of perpetrator priests with incredulity that the person they knew was capable of the crime. It is not that they disbelieved accounts of abuse but had a cognitive difficulty reconciling the apparent "goodness" of the perpetrator with their crime. Stella recalls the following:

> Yeah – I just find it really bizarre … So apparently the brothers and this priest were up to no good … but it was never anything that was offered to me or tried on me … I had good support but people who were at that facility had had dreadful experiences. So, I don't really understand it but I'm just thankful that I was alright.

Emma remembers an encounter with Vincent Ryan, ‘I thought “he seems like he is a really nice fellow” … Low and behold it turned out to be Vincent Ryan didn't it – who is in jail. He was a lovely man – a really nice bloke’.

Grooming is the process by which perpetrators of abuse cultivate the trust of a child, significant adults, and the community for the specific goal of gaining access to a child so that they can manipulate, exploit, and abuse them (McAlinden 2012; O’Leary, Koh & Dare 2017). Grooming can involve actions that increase a perpetrator’s opportunity of abusing a child undetected (Munro & Fish 2015). Eileen Munro and Shelia Fish (2015) observe:

> With grooming behaviour in particular, its purpose may not be clear not just to the observer but even to the victim … The situation is further complicated by the fact that benign and grooming behaviours can have some of the very same goals. (p. 12)

Josephine explains how her family were groomed:

> The school my brothers went to, now in hindsight, it was just rife with paedophiles. All the brothers were paedophiles and the priests there … a lot of the boys’ lives have been ruined from. Those brothers that were the paedophiles, came to our house. We’ve got photos in our family album and stuff. But at the time we never knew, and it was quite shocking when it all came out … it’s horrible, horrible, horrible stuff … one of my brothers was quite angry with my parents, but they didn’t know … [paedophiles are] such professionals at grooming the community as well as grooming the boys, so that you aren’t aware of them.

Within religious organisations such as the Catholic Church, grooming of individuals and communities is harder to detect (Munro & Fish 2015; O’Leary, Koh & Dare 2017). This may account for the participants conflictive narratives where their interpretive adjustments involve a mix of scepticism and certainty as they negotiate and try to make sense of their experiences.

Overall, participants in this study express deep disgust at the high prevalence of CPCSA in the Catholic Church in Australia. Their narratives conveyed their disappointment both at the treatment of survivors and the failure of the hierarchy of the official Catholic Church to take responsibility for the crisis. Patricia remarks, ‘It seems like everyone knows that people used to talk about certain priests being sleezy or slimy and it was the subject of sort of sniggering or eye rolling, but no one seemed to take it seriously’. Nanette notes the following:

> There’s been a real lack of a deeply compassionate response to survivors and victims. I think we haven’t seen the hierarchical leadership of the Church really take on board the harm that was done and demonstrate that in the way that they then put victims and survivors first.

Several participants express that, in an attempt to make sense of the crisis of CPCSA, they had changed or reduced their participation in Catholicism. For instance, Marline recounts how she stopped attending Mass. Billie recalls how she stopped practising the sacrament of reconciliation. She says, ‘I can't sit in there with those priests when some of them that I trusted and are now in jail. What's the point?’ Such discontinuities can interrupt or call into question hegemonic normative practices in Catholicism providing opportunities for new technologies of Catholicism to emerge.

Frances

Frances was raised with a strong sense of Catholic identity by a Catholic father and Protestant mother. Growing up, her parents prioritised leading “a good life” and “being a good person” over Mass attendance and sacramental participation. Frances went to Mass only at Christmas and Easter and received most of her Catholic formation during scripture classes at her local public school. Recounting her experience of her first Eucharist and first Reconciliation, she muses:

> I don't mean to be derogatory, but it was important in the same way as when I got my hostess badge from Brownies. A ceremony I engaged with. I didn't feel like I'd entered another level in the Church or participation or anything.

Frances is very open about her desire to pass on Catholicism to her children and reflects:

> I have a very strong connection to Catholic culture. I feel like it's the Catholicism that has formed a lot of my views about how I participate in the community and how I form my views and what I think my priorities are. So, I thought that was important for them to be exposed to that.

Being a "good" Catholic is not about attending Mass regularly; Frances notes the following:

> I don't feel like I have to go to Mass more often to be a good Catholic. I feel like I participate in my community in a way that very much reflects what I think are the important teachings of the Catholic Church. I do that through my work, as well as through my social, community connections and how I try to engage with other people.

The "important teachings" Frances refers to are related to social justice issues; 'It's that teaching of using your talents for the benefit of others and you're not the centre of things. It's about giving, not receiving sort of stuff'. Distancing herself from Catholic teachings on sexuality, gender, and marriage, she states:

> I think their views on women, on sexuality – well, it's probably women and sexuality are regressive. I think they're un-Christian … I just ignore anything the Church has to say about women because I don't think they have an informed view or an experiential view on it.

Frances identifies strongly with feminism; this she explains means 'that women are equal to men. That we're not better, they're not better, and that we're entitled to equal participation in every aspect of life'. When I asked about a partner, she laughs and says, 'I'm not Catholic in this way. My children are both donor-conceived'. As the interview draws to a close, she remarks:

> I shouldn't have to leave, they should change. It's my Church as much as their Church. Just because I have progressive views – and I know that's a debate, because my views are quite radical on some points, but I think, no, I'm not going.

7.11 "No, I'm not going": Social justice activities as sense making and *praxis*

Several Gen X women in this study participate in social justice activism, volunteer, and fundraise as an expression of faith and a way to stay connected with their Catholic identities. Regina, for instance, attends Mass regularly and is heavily involved in her parish, her school community, and social justice activism. She says the following:

> I'm very involved with different social justice groups, with Caritas and with Catholic missions as well. And the gentleman that runs Catholic mission is also part of that parish as well. So, there are connections there.

For most women interviewed, however, social justice activism is separate and distinct from Mass attendance or any involvement in parish life. For example, Patricia muses, 'the last time I went to Mass on a non-festive day I wouldn't remember'. She claims being Catholic is 'overwhelmingly a cultural thing. It's a kind of a fealty of some sort I think … a social justice ethos'. Nanette reflects on her regular participation in social justice activism as a practice of faith and technology of Catholicism. She claims the following:

> Living out my beliefs in that way has definitely been a practice since high school. It's about doing things for justice, being a voice for justice. Yes – very much that sense of justice rather than charity.

Yet, for Nanette social justice activism is also a way 'to be involved in Church without being limited by the structures of it'. Bernadette describes her work with the disadvantaged and homeless as following the teachings of Jesus. She says the following:

> If Jesus were to walk among some of the stuff that we're doing … he would hi-five. He would say you have got it. You understand. You are seeing me. You are seeing God in every person … and he would be very happy.

At the same time, however, she asserts the separation of her social justice ministry from the 'inaction' of the clerics in her archdiocese who have an attitude of 'bringing up the drawbridge' and not letting anybody in. While Nanette and Bernadette and other Gen X women do use their social justice activism as a technology of Catholicism to affirm their Catholic identities, they are, at the same time, enacting a type of interpretive adjustment. Their actions which affirm and renew their faith and identities also adjust their experience of Catholicism in a way that enables them to stay connected despite the actions or inactions of the official Catholic Church.

There are a number of possible reasons for the way that Gen X women are taking part in social justice activism as both a technology of Catholicism and a type of interpretive adjustment. It is conceivable that sectarianism is a significant formative influence for Gen X women, which has led to sympathy for "the underdog" and involvement in social justice activism. For instance, Frances' participation in Catholicism is separate from official teachings and normative practices and is instead centred on involvement in social justice activities. Reflecting on her upbringing, Frances names her family culture as "Catholic". She describes her grandparents as 'very working class, very engaged with the labour movement' and notes how she identified being Catholic with being 'engaged with the underdog'. She says the following:

> I identified as a Catholic, as a kid, through those things. We always said we were Catholic. I just think that as I got older, what I wanted to do with my life and my philosophy very much resonated with that cultural, social justice side of the Catholic Church.

Australia's long history of antagonistic denominational relations between Protestants and Catholics has shaped how Gen X Catholics understand themselves. Until the mid-nineteenth century, Catholicism in Australia reflected a largely Irish, working-class minority to the predominantly English protestant establishment (Cahill et al. 2004); Catholics were generally understood as social and economic underdogs (Warhurst 2008). It was not until the 1960s and 1970s when post-World War II immigration and the end of the White Australia Policy liberalised Australian immigration policy that the Catholic population in Australia diversified (McEwan, Sterland & McPhillips 2020). It is therefore not unexpected that Frances, and others from Gen X, would have experienced sectarianism and anti-Catholic taunts. A few participants in this study recounted experiences of sectarianism in their interviews. Ruby gives the most vivid account when she recalls the taunt, she experienced walking past the public school each morning on her way to her Catholic school:

> We used to walk past them, and they would call us "Conny whackers stink like crackers"[20] … that's what the state school kids used to call to us … Yes, "Conny whackers stink like crackers on a Sunday morning" so I guess because you went to church on a Sunday.

In this study, however, there is not a clear link between being a target of anti-Catholic attitudes and later involvement in social justice activities. Ruby, for instance, does not report any practice of social justice activism in her interview.

Participants who use social justice activism as technologies of Catholicism and a form of interpretive adjustment typically have strong formative experiences where significant role models participated in some form of social justice activity. Frances refers

[20] The origins and exact meaning of the taunt directed at Ruby and her classmates is unknown. Anecdotal evidence suggests that derogatory chants were commonplace in interactions between public school and Catholic school children in Australia in the 1960s and 1970s.

to family connections with the Catholic labour movement. Luanne recounts:

> It has come from my Nan – from a really strong social justice focus in my life …. when I was a child, my Nan did work with reconciliation for Aboriginal people in our community and through the parish. She was a strong advocate for women and women's rights … she was a really strong influence for me growing up and still to this day remains my greatest inspiration.

While some women speak of family members who were heavily involved in social activism, participants who recall positive, strong relationships with feminist nuns tend to be participating in social justice activities as adults as a form of religious practice and a way of making sense of their Catholic identities. For instance, Patricia reflects on her childhood memories of being in an inner-city parish:

> Well, it was a completely different sort of ethos … a completely different kind of Catholicism over there … Aboriginal people would be wandering in and out of the church with their pets at any point. People could get up and make speeches, which they frequently did … after the homily … It was just completely the Jesus of the poor thing. There was frequent criticism of the Church hierarchy and its culture. A whole heap of kind of feminist nuns who would – you know, none of them wearing the outfit, living among Aboriginal people, doing work and just sharing their lives … [At school] we had a nun there, as a head mistress … [the nuns] were the everyday representations of the Church for us.

Understood in Foucauldian framework, the identity of "the nun" is constructed and positioned in Catholicism as a prophetic "call by God" to a life of sacrifice for the benefit of the official Catholic Church (Brock 2010, 2013).[21] After Vatican II when Catholic women began to mobilise for significant reforms within Catholicism (McEwan & McPhillips 2017), some nuns sought to resist subordination within a *kyriarchal* Church and redefine their "call by God" not as invitation to labour for the Catholic Church, but

[21] The subjectivity and position of the nun is highly significant in Catholicism (Brock 2010, 2013), however, there is not adequate space in this thesis to adequately address this cohort of Catholic women. Very few nuns in Australia are from Gen X (Dixon et al. 2018).

to work and advocate with the poor and those marginalised by society and within the Church (Brock 2013). Although bound by a theology of obedience to *kyriarchal*, ecclesial power structures nuns in Australia became leaders in social welfare reform and education and some, like Saint Mary MacKillop, even resisted Episcopal agendas (McPhillips 2016). Their activism for issues such as ordination for women, liturgical language, and access to positions of religious authority often ran in parallel with reforms that feminists were fighting for in the secular world: equality in law, education, and labour reforms, and improved reproductive rights (McPhillips 2016).

A common characteristic of the cohort of Gen X Catholic women that use social justice activism as a form of *praxis* and an interpretive adjustment is their identification with feminism. A number of participants express that their practice of social justice activism and their ability to reconcile a feminist identity with *kyriarchal* teachings and structure in Catholicism is linked. Violet, who volunteers at a refugee centre, says the following:

> My faith is more about actions … I'm a stay-at-home Mum which I sort of get a bit of stick about. People think you should be working … I'm a feminist and what it means to me is promoting and pushing rights for women.

When reflecting on the influence of people on their faith, participants frequently mentioned feminist nuns who had a significant influence on the way they currently engage with their Christian faith and Catholicism. Gemma speaks of her aunt who was a nun:

> She was very caring, and she was always banging on about Mary MacKillop … and I look back now, and I think she was great. She was a very gung-ho feminist and very passionate about social justice. I didn't kind of notice those things at the time, when I was younger, but I see it now.

A number of participants in this study have positive in-school and post-school memories of nuns participating in social justice activism and modelling feminist values.

For example, Libby, who regularly volunteers and participates in social activism as an expression of her Catholic identity, notes the following:

> While we certainly had a couple of shockers of nuns, I think most of the nuns I saw lived their beliefs … I saw a group of women who by and large lived their values, which made a big impression on me. And who were alert to how other people experienced the world and the impact of societal structures on people's opportunity. I think that was very influential … It wasn't a particular person as much as that general environment.

Nanette explains, ‘we had very strong women that taught us in that school … we were really encouraged to be thinking and to be asking questions’. She recounts a formative encounter involving nuns:

> After university and working for a little while, I went overseas and actually stayed with a friend who was teaching English in [Central America]. We lived with a couple of [religious] sisters in the little village. And being in a house with them, and witnessing their humour and humanity there, or humility, I should say. Their humility and just the way they engaged with the local people was amazing.

For Nanette and Libby, “being Catholic” is more than just engaging in sacramental traditions or meeting a set of obligations. Even while they and other Gen X women use social justice activism as technologies of Catholicism to express their faith and construct their identity, they are also enacting a type of interpretive adjustment to resist and reimagine *kyriarchal* teachings and structures in Catholicism.

7.12 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have contested the magisterium’s assertion that official Catholicism is a unitary discourse. I have argued that there is no single representation or set of technologies of Catholicism that clearly distinguish what it is to be a Catholic woman. During their interviews, the Gen X women who took part in this study recounted diverse narratives of ritual and embodied practices constructed and enacted from a juxtaposition

of the many complex discursive elements of their religious and secular lives. Some women described how they embraced the norms and ideals of official Catholicism. Their compliance produced recognisability and the intrinsic rewards that accompany it. Other Gen X women told stories of making interpretive adjustments to cast off institutional and male defined expectations of Catholicism, including prescribed Mass attendance and sacramental practice. Interpretive adjustments enable Gen X women to tactically assert their own needs and make space for themselves and their own well-being within and beyond official Catholicism. The following chapter further develops the genealogy of Gen X women and explores the consequences of a lack of recognisability in the power/knowledge regime of Catholicism.

Chapter Eight: The consequences of a lack of recognisability

8.1 Introduction

In Chapter Seven, I used genealogy as a method to establish that, despite the efforts of the magisterium to regulate official Catholicism as a unitary discourse, Gen X women's identities are complex and are located both within and beyond established magisterial frameworks. I showed that as Gen X women use technologies of Catholicism and interpretive adjustments to ratify, navigate, and subvert their Catholic identities and *kyriarchal* power dynamics, they often exist outside parameters set by the magisterium and struggle for recognisability.

In this chapter, I explore the consequences of a lack of recognisability. Firstly, I examine Gen X women's positionality and opportunities for agency in official Catholicism by drawing on Michel Foucault's (2003a) conceptualisation *monster*, Judith Butler's (2015, 2020) theoretical concept *vulnerability*, and Sara Ahmed's (2014, 2017) notion of *wilfulness*. Then, I recount the stories of harm and suffering Gen X women express in their interviews. I argue these multiple forms of abuse, which are a quotidian part of life for Gen X Catholic women, are brought about by vulnerability and judgements of wilfulness. This doesn't mean that Gen X Catholic women have no agency; rather, I contend vulnerability and judgements of wilfulness contribute significantly to women choosing whether to identify with or distance themselves from official Catholicism in Australia.

8.2 Abnormal individuals

In his analysis of power dynamics, Foucault (2003a) uses the term *monster* to name abnormal individuals, or persons who are discursively constructed within a network of

power and knowledge, yet unexpectedly, at the same time, exceed or transgress the dominant conceptualisation of subjectivity. As I explored in Chapter Five, Foucault's analysis of the monster is concerned with the questioning of discursive categories. He explains that monsters, by their very existence, fail to embody yet also threaten the natural inevitability of established groupings and systems of power and knowledge (Foucault 2003a).

In Catholicism, the enactment of gender, which the magisterium deems inherent and natural, is, like any gendered performance, inherently unstable (Butler 2015). As discussed in Chapter Five, it is not through the magisterium's prescription of gendered and regulatory norms, but in and through their citation and performance that women become gendered subjects of Catholicism. This is because the norms or laws that regulate gendered Catholic identities are never exact and can only ever be an imitation of hegemonic magisterial discourse. As women participate in and perform official technologies of Catholicism over again, their own actions can become techniques of normalisation that perpetuate and legitimise *kyriarchal* power relations, male normativity, and female difference. Yet, unable to embody maleness or the Church-sanctioned, fantasised, domesticated, maternal archetype of Mary, Gen X women constantly strive but never fully achieve recognisability in Catholicism.

As I explored in the previous chapter when women enact technologies of Catholicism, perform interpretive adjustments, live embodied lives, menstruate, use artificial contraception, give birth, and lactate, they are not merely affirming and reproducing, but also subversively parodying the norm of the "good Catholic woman" set by the magisterium. Paradoxically, the actuality of Gen X Catholic women existing beyond the magisterium's discursive construct of "good Catholic woman" but still within the power/knowledge regime of Catholicism, establishes them as monsters. The label

monster, however, has negative connotations and risks making Gen X women abject. I will argue that a different term is needed to explain women's positionality and agency in the power/knowledge regime of Catholicism and here I draw on Butler's term *vulnerability* and Ahmed's notion of *wilfulness*.

8.3 Establishing vulnerability

In her analysis of the precarity of populations who lack recognisability within institutions, structures, and systems, of which Catholicism is an example, Butler (2018, 2020) examines vulnerability as a theoretical concept. She claims that a person not being recognisable or not being counted as a self, results in a certain bodily vulnerability that is assigned by the discursive relations through which a body is, or is not, constituted (Butler 2018, 2020). Thus, a lack of subjectivity in official Catholicism, which establishes Gen X Catholic women as monsters, also infers vulnerability. Here, vulnerability should not be understood as simply a 'subjective state, but rather as a feature of our shared or independent lives' (Butler 2020, loc. 570). This means Gen X Catholic women are not simply vulnerable, instead vulnerability is established in the way they are valued and disvalued within the power/knowledge regime of Catholicism.

The vulnerability of Gen X Catholic women, however, is not only a type of oppression. Performativity operates through two dimensions; through the processes of being acted on and the conditions and possibilities for acting (Butler 2018). Accordingly, in a system of power/knowledge such as Catholicism when norms act on a person, it follows that a person is susceptible or vulnerable to that action. This means that in a theoretical sense, vulnerability is not a purposeful choice. Vulnerability is a response to the processes of normative power that exists prior to any possibility of forming or enacting any self-designation. This does not mean being vulnerable is the same as being

passive. Within the process of performativity something unexpected can happen. New formulations of identity can be enacted as a type of agentic response to any norms that are assigned (Butler 2018). Butler (2020) clarifies, as follows:

> Vulnerability ought not to be identified exclusively with passivity; it makes sense only in light of an embodied set of social relations, including practices of resistance. A view of vulnerability as part of embodied social relations and actions can help us understand how and why forms of resistance emerge as they do. (loc. 2292)

There is a type of contradictory interdependence between the vulnerable and the structures and systems that establish them as such. Butler (2020) explains 'the relational understanding of vulnerability shows that we are not altogether separable from the conditions that make our lives possible or impossible' (loc. 583). In other words, vulnerability is part of a relational system and Gen X Catholic women are at the same time vulnerable and an integral part of the power/knowledge regime of Catholicism. A denial of subjectivity, which establishes Gen X women as monsters and infers vulnerability, also produces a certain mode of agency.

Martha

Martha works as a pastoral associate in a Catholic parish and describes herself as 'heavily involved, both on a personal and professional level'. She attends Mass at least weekly and recounts her love for the community in which she works. Martha grew up in Ireland in a devout Catholic family that attended Mass, prayed as a family, and cared for others in their community. She recalls the following of her Catholic upbringing:

> Being Catholic was pretty much in our DNA. It was what we lived and breathed. And it wasn't something we separated from our life. It was just who we were … The Church spoke to every aspect of our lives. And that was just the way it was.

Martha's mother, who she names as a strong formative influence, was a Eucharistic minister in their parish. She remembers of her parents:

> They were very non-judgmental in a time when I thought the Church was, I feel very judgmental to people … So, I think that I got my faith probably more from my parents than through the actual Church itself.

None of Martha's adult children attend Mass; when describing their practice, she explains, 'They do have a strong, live faith – but it's not dependent on the Catholic Church'. When asked about her own satisfaction with Catholic teachings and doctrine, Martha claims frustration with teachings around homosexuality, divorce, remarriage, and birth control. She asserts:

> I do have a bit of an issue with the fact that women are basically running this Church but have not really got a voice … women should probably be allowed to be ordained … Or even if women were not allowed to be ordained, there needs to be some sort of equality in leadership, where women have that voice within the Church.

When I asked Martha about her own experiences, she recalled:

> I guess I'm very aware of the position of women within the Catholic Church especially because I work for it. And you know I have the same qualifications as the deacon in the room opposite me except I was the top of the class, and he was towards the bottom. And yet, I will be looked on as less than him. So, I am very aware of how the Church feels about women.

8.4 "I feel called to do what I do": Challenging vulnerability

Status as "good Catholic woman" is precarious and women who violate boundaries in the power/knowledge regime of Catholicism often live with vulnerability. In official Catholicism, the separation of private and public spaces is clearly established. Catholic teachings around womanhood relegate the religious authority of women to the private, domestic domain of the home. Women who do try to claim positions of public ministry and governance are told by the magisterium that they are mimicking machismo and seeking power (Francis 2016a; Vatican News 2019). As I explained in Chapters Three and Four, women who seek ordination are understood by the magisterium to be defying the natural gendered order of humanity and Church, and as a consequence they are

silenced and sidelined. Yet despite this suppression, many of the Gen X women in this study speak of a desire for ministry and service that is often paired with an acknowledgement of their own vulnerability. For example, Luanne is a teacher and has post-graduate qualifications in theology. Not being able to be ordained to the Catholic priesthood has left her feeling 'pissed off'. Nora, says, 'I was a very keen Catholic as a child I wanted to be a priest by the time I was eight'. When asked how she felt when she realised women could not be priests, Nora explains the following:

> Dirty, very dirty. I still it is one of the things that I really don't like about the Catholic Church. They haven't opened it up more to the female population and the sisters. Because I guess all through my education there has been some strong women … really intelligent and really admirable women … I don't see what makes them unable to lead a Mass or we would often have prayer services and things like that, but they would never do anything more than handing out communion in Mass which I always thought was very unfair.

To claim positions of public ministry, women must challenge their vulnerability, push at boundaries, and question discursive truths. For instance, Martha's desire to serve her community has opened her eyes to the marginalisation of women in official Catholicism, especially those who express a desire to participate in public ministry. However, rather than distancing herself, Martha describes how she has fashioned her own space and place in her community:

> I don't actually care about the hierarchy … I'm here as a pastoral care role and if I can make a difference in [the parishioners] lives, who cares? They view me as somebody that they care about. Somebody that makes a difference. So that's what I care about. It does rankle. There has been issues over the years. I've been home in tears and I know that it's because I'm a woman … I guess sometimes it'd be easier to walk away. But this is my Church too … I do feel very called to do what I do … I get a lot of satisfaction. So, on those days when I go home and want to kill someone because the Church is so far behind with women, I remind myself of those things and then I can get back up and do it again. But I don't do it quietly.

Martha's striking comment 'this is my Church too' gives voice to how she asserts ownership of her ministry and claims a place for herself within her parish as a pastoral care worker.

Bernadette works as a hospital chaplain. During her interview she noted the following, 'I'm frustrated … I feel neglected and not valued and stuff … I am a girl and I'm not good enough. That is the message that the Church is getting to me – definitely'. In spite of feeling demoralised by her vulnerability, Bernadette, like Martha, proclaims ownership of her vocation and Church and carves out a space for herself in her community. She states:

> I know that I am called … I will do what God needs me to do – wants me to do - that is my work … My Church – my people – down in the dirty bits … My work sitting with old people and families who are dying in hospital … because it is ugly dirty ministry you know. … It is beautiful, but it is smelly, and it is confronting, and it can be noisy. and it can be scary and all those things. It's okay for me to do that but you know otherwise.

Martha and Bernadette emphasise the importance and urgency of the ministry they perform, yet they also acknowledge the precarious nature of their position in Catholicism. Martha speaks with awareness of her vulnerability when she recounts her fear that a new parish priest will remove her from her pastoral care position. Bernadette notes the distance of her local parish priest from her ministry at the hospital:

> They wear the fanciest vestments you have ever seen in the world. That irritates me no end … it's like it doesn't fit with who I am, with the community, with the work that I do, I guess. They just seemed so far removed from how I see being a true walker of my faith in what I do every day. It is not about worship or whatever but in the way I work, in the way I have my friendships, they just seem to be quite removed.

As Martha and Bernadette consciously carve out a space for themselves, they are using interpretive adjustments to strategically adapt their position regarding Catholicism

rather than adopt a standpoint that would more than likely lead them to withdraw or disaffiliate. At the same time, they challenge their vulnerability and contest the notion that Gen X Catholic women who are engaging with official Catholicism are obedient to male, magisterial authority and are content with institutional structures that limit their ministry. For these women, to call themselves "Catholic" is to claim Catholicism and its associated traditions as their baptismal right. "Being Catholic" is not a case of passive vulnerability; "being Catholic" extends beyond semantics or complying to a set of male-defined, institutional rules and practices – it is a way of life and a call from God to reach out and support others.

Monica

Monica grew up in a deeply religious Catholic household. Both her parents immigrated to Australian and were from "staunch" European Catholic families. Monica describes her father as 'Catholic like you have never seen before' and recalls a devout childhood where she attended daily Mass and went to Catholic schools. She recounts:

> We said the Rosary every night, fifteen minutes of Bible reading every night, Angelus at 12 noon if we were home from school, morning offering and evening offering at the end of the Rosary and Mass every morning – it was constant.

During her early twenties, Monica distanced herself from Catholicism. When she met her husband, however, she decided to resume her Catholic practice and be married in a Catholic Church. This was complicated as her husband, who was also Catholic, had been married before and required an annulment of his first marriage.

Monica and her husband had fertility issues and she struggled to reconcile her desire for children and her need to access reproductive health services with Catholic teachings that claim artificial fertility treatments are immoral and against God.

Monica explains, 'I thought if I do this, I'm just the devil'. Her father told her that babies conceived using IVF techniques 'had no soul and could never go to

heaven'. Unsure what to do, she asked several priests and received very different answers. In the end, Monica decided to proceed. She says the following about her decision, 'I thought, if I have a headache, I take a Panadol. I can't do this, so I'll get medicine to do it'.

Unfortunately, Monica's fertility treatment wasn't a straightforward process and as her cycles failed, she recounts how she felt abandoned.

> I went to the healing mass at Mary MacKillop Chapel … I was getting really depressed about my cycles failing all the time. I was nearly a basket case … I was bawling my eyes out and I was talking to God and saying why won't you give me a child … And I think at that moment I made a deal with God, and I said "if you give me kids, I'll raise them as Catholic".

But even a deal with God wasn't that simple. Monica says,

> I was still quite resentful because I thought this isn't working because it's against God…. God doesn't want me to do this. And I still saw things in the space of reward, sin, punishment, and hell … you know I was just pleading with God basically at that point. That next month I did fall pregnant … It was pretty intense.

Yet, Monica remains uncertain and confused. She says,

> It probably should be a conversion experience, but I still feel like my faith dwindles and it's only still growing, and it is still misunderstood … I still don't understand this "God's love for you" thing. I don't feel like God loves me. I don't feel like I love God because it's never been explained to me in terms of loving God… I struggle with this all the time you know. I think about it a lot and I read a lot.

Monica chooses to continue to practice Catholicism and attend Mass. She told me 'The prayer I say when I go to Mass now is, "please help me understand this – because I don't get it. I don't even know why I'm here, but I made a deal"'.

8.5 "Please help me understand this": Negotiating vulnerability

Martha and Bernadette's narratives clearly illustrate how vulnerability can impact how women inhabit public spaces. Yet, even domestic spaces in Catholicism are not neutral settings. In their interviews, Monica and a number of other participants speak of how life

experiences that conflict with official Catholic teachings around womanhood, gender, and sexuality, mean they are compelled to find ways to be both an embodied woman and Catholic. They often describe using interpretive adjustments to negotiate vulnerability and navigate Catholic teachings and doctrine with contradictory consciousness and angst. For instance, Marline and Elizabeth were pregnant before they married and struggled to marry quickly in a Catholic ceremony; Eleanor battles with guilt caused by being sexually active before her marriage; and Luanne tries to find a way of being accepted by her parish community as a divorcee and lesbian. Mari tells the story of a friend who was navigating the Catholic teaching that prohibits sex before marriage. She recalls the following:

> I had a friend who was a practising Catholic, she was [a teenager]. She was trying to work out this sex before marriage thing. She had a boyfriend and she kept whittling down what sex was. The definition in the end for her was if she had a piece of clothing on it wasn't sex. So, she would [have sex] and if she had her socks on it was okay. But they were clearly having sex.

Monica balances her desire for children with Catholic teachings that claim IVF is wrong. Her resistance and agency do not come from a total dismissal of everything Catholic. Instead, she creatively deals with the dilemma of her vulnerability while continuing to engage with Catholic prayer and ritual. Monica, like many women in this study, uses interpretive adjustments to achieve a level of self-understanding and determination, but not without struggle. The processes that produce and imprint Catholic identities and recognisability, also inscribe moral accountabilities that functioned not unlike Foucault's panopticon. The magisterial gaze that monitors "sinful" transgressions can be internalised in the interrogational voice of self-critique.

When Gen X women engage with technologies of Catholicism, negotiate vulnerability, their own lived experiences, and a religious chain of memory they reflexively deal with intersecting meanings and encounters that conflict with their life

goals. For instance, in her interview, Antonia described growing up in 'a strict Catholic family' where a lot of parental importance was placed on her formation and knowledge of Catholic teachings and faith practice. Antonia attended Catholic schooling, went to Mass weekly and received the Catholic Sacraments. In her teens she joined the Catholic youth movement *Antioch,* which practices regular communal confession and devotions. After marrying in her early twenties, Antonia and her husband decided to try for children but experienced issues conceiving. Antonia was faced with having to choose between the teachings of the official Catholic Church and seeking treatment through IVF. She explains:

> We had to go through IVF early. It was a bit of a struggle to know that that wasn't supported … We had to battle our childhood teachings in order to be okay with it … So, you start questioning the reality of life versus the reality of this archaic warped teaching. And that probably coincided with the first time I had to question my life, versus this Bible, versus this organised religion.

The struggle with vulnerability and Catholic teachings and practices has, perhaps inadvertently, inspired some Gen X women to question the role of Catholicism in their lives. As I explained in Chapter Seven, negotiating her right to access reproductive health services with Catholic teachings led Antonia to disaffiliate from Catholicism.

8.6 Gen X women: Wilful subjects

In the power/knowledge regime of Catholicism, the bodily vulnerability of Gen X women, which can act as a form of oppression, also challenges and undermines the certainty of official Catholicism, the magisterium, and its hegemonic gendered norms. In a Foucauldian sense, monsters and vulnerability are mechanisms of bio-power. Foucault (2003a) explains that as monsters exceed the discursive limits of their conceptualisation, they simultaneously represent the possibility of every difference and irregularity they

exhibit. As the "possibility of the impossible", a monster's non-includable difference is what jeopardizes the ability of an established system of knowledge and power to create and reproduce difference. Ambiguously, this difference – which also produces vulnerability – challenges and destabilises the certainty and permanence of social and cultural norms. Thus, bodily vulnerability, which can be mobilised by a power/knowledge regime as a way of oppressing and asserting power over certain populations, can inversely be enacted as a way of asserting existence, equality, and claiming public and private spaces.

This challenge does not go unchecked. Vulnerability implies a susceptibility to being attacked or harmed, either physically or emotionally. Indeed, Foucault (2003a) explains that a response to a monster's capacity and power to destabilise is 'the will for pure and simple suppression' (p. 56). When institutions, structures, and systems exercise their will "to supress", any oppositions can be interpreted as wilfulness (Ahmed 2014, 2017). To exist, monsters are required to persist and prevail against the power/knowledge regime that is transgressed or exceeded (Foucault 2003a). Vulnerable populations must exercise resistance to overcome vulnerability.

To persist or resist is often interpreted as wilfulness. Ahmed (2017) defines wilfulness as follows:

> Asserting or disposed to assert one's own will against persuasion, instruction, or command; governed by will without regard to reason; determined to take one's own way; obstinately self-willed or persevere. (p. 65)

To be judged *wilful*, however, does not mean to be purposefully wilful. Ahmed (2014) clarifies that wilfulness can be a judgement by an individual, group, or institution of how women and other marginalised groups interact with their milieu. She states, 'feminists are often judged as wilful women because we are unwilling to participate in

sexist culture' (Ahmed 2014, p. 154). In a disciplinary apparatus, a judgement of wilfulness is a way of addressing those whose subjectivity has become a problem (Ahmed 2014, 2017). Simply failing to inhabit an unattainable norm can result in a charge of wilfulness. For instance, in *Living a Feminist Life* (2017), Ahmed argues that to be a lesbian in a patriarchal, heteronormative society is judged as a type of wilfulness. In a similar way, Gen X women who live out their everyday, embodied lives within and against the regime of official Catholicism can be judged as wilful.

Wilfulness can be used to explain the different ways Gen X Catholic women respond to *kyriarchal* practices and traditions. In Chapter Seven, I discussed how, in the process of performing certain technologies of Catholicism, some study participants take up opportunities for interpretive adjustments and construct a type of Catholic subjectivity that is often not in harmony with the ideals of the magisterium. When these women face vulnerability, the choices they make have the capacity to disrupt or destabilise *kyriarchal* injunctions. Their actions are thus often perceived as wilfulness. By contrast, in Chapter Seven I also illustrated how another group of participants in this study chose to invest the hegemonic construction of Catholic womanhood and pursue the ideal of the "good Catholic woman". These women, when faced with vulnerability, often take up and refer to *kyriarchal* practices and traditions. Ahmed (2017) explains, the power of will can act 'through will, not simply against will' (p. 75). In other words, some Gen X women are willingly enacting *kyriarchal* edicts to avoid the cost of vulnerability and/or being judged wilful.

8.7 The costs of vulnerability

Through centuries of biblical tradition, Christian women have been repeatedly told stories to remind them of the consequences of wilfulness. Interpretations of Genesis 3 attribute

the fall of humanity from grace to the wilfulness of Eve. The post-Pauline epistle 1 Timothy uses Genesis 3 to justify the subjection of women in Christianity (Radford Ruether 1983). The figure Jezebel (1 Kings 16:31; 18–19; 21:1–16; 2 Kings 9:30–37) has been identified and stigmatised as a reviled outsider (Trible 1995), an image that has grown to a wider usage 'as a metaphor for any woman deemed dangerous, seductive, and/or evil' (Jackson 2015, p. 240). Vashti (Esther 1; 2:1; 4:17) pays the price of perpetual banishment for what is judged wilful disobedience to the command of her husband, the king (Sakenfeld 2003).

The irony of a judgement of wilfulness is that women frequently become wilful because of an appraisal of wilfulness (Ahmed 2017). This was my experience when I made the decision to undertake this research project. I was working for a Catholic archdiocese and had made the decision to research Catholic women so that I could attempt to explain the reduced participation of Gen X women compared to previous generations. Just after I enrolled, I was on my way to an event when my manager warned me not to tell anyone I was studying Catholic women, because I might be perceived to be in favour of women's ordination. I hadn't considered the magisterium's stance against the ordination of women, or a feminist approach to research. However, as a result of my manager's judgement of my research as wilfulness, I became wilful.

The costs of vulnerability and being judged wilful are high. Feminist theologians experience sidelining and the suppression of their scholarship (Imperatori-Lee 2015). Ahmed (2017) claims:

> the very judgement of willfulness is a crucial part of the disciplinary apparatus. It is the judgement that allows violence (even murder) to be understood as care as well as discipline. (p. 67)

In Catholicism, Mariology and the genre of hagiography, or the life stories of the saints, are used to teach the virtues of a lack of wilfulness and the consequences of being deemed wilful. The ideal of womanhood emphasised in hagiographies is purity, meekness, patience, and submission (Ashton 2000; McPhillips 2003, 2013). Saint Maria Goretti was eleven years old when she was stalked, sexually assaulted, and murdered by a twenty-year-old man who lived with her family (McClay 2018). She is venerated and was canonised for resisting her attacker's advances, maintaining her purity (more specifically her virginity), and forgiving her murderer on her death bed (McClay 2018). As recently as 2018, Anna Kolesárová, a Slovak girl who was shot to dead in her home during an attempted rape in 1944, was beatified and approved by the magisterium as a martyr in *defensum castitatis* – in defence of her virginity (Wilson O'Reilly 2018). From the hagiography of Saint Mary MacKillop, Australian women learned of the consequences of vulnerability and wilfulness in the story of MacKillop's excommunication (Gardiner 1998). Hagiographies frame the harm that results from judgements of wilfulness in Catholicism as a pedagogy of correction.

A lack of recognisability in Catholicism establishes the vulnerability Gen X women. Ironically, however, any vulnerability that locates women beyond the limits of their discursive conceptualisation also enables them to challenge the certainty of Catholicism. While this invokes a type of agency, it also means that Gen X women encounter resistance. To exist in the power/knowledge regime of Catholicism, they must persist. Yet to persist when faced with a lack of recognisability can be deemed as wilfulness. A judgement of wilfulness is costly. During interviews, many participants expressed that they have experienced harm and suffering as women in Catholicism.

Lizbeth

Lizbeth is a highly successful chief executive officer for a Catholic not-for-profit organisation. During her interview she speaks of a deep faith that has informed her career and life choices. She explains, God is love:

> The experience of love. That is the divine for me, but it's not a self-aggrandising love. It's a love that connects, that sees the divine in each human and in the connection of all of that humanity. It's a turning towards love. That's how I experience the divine.

Although Lizbeth's Mass attendance has 'waxed and waned at times over the years', she until recently attended Mass each Sunday with her Italian Catholic parents and siblings. She claims, "being Catholic" is in her DNA, yet, at the time of her interview she had 'given up Mass'. When I asked why, Lizbeth explained that it was because of the inability of the Catholic hierarchy to acknowledge the harm of clericalism and the 'lifelong suffering' caused by CPCSA. She says, 'I just don't think they get it … So, I thought I would give up Mass for Lent'.

Lizbeth has post-graduate qualification is theology and feels undervalued. She reels at the inadequacy of many priests and asserts:

> I've paid for all my own theological formation. I do expect more from those who have been formed and paid for by our tradition … that's the judgment in me, that's the part that I think that's sort of wounded and still angry … the congregations, the faithful deserves so much more, so much more.

Speaking about women's participation in the Catholic Church at the same time as her own calling to preach, she claims:

> Well, at one level there's no real place for [women] in the true decision-making and participation in the Church. We get to participate in Church life as the Church tells us that we can, the roles that have been assigned to us, you know, but I fundamentally believe that I would do a far better job on the pulpit every Sunday and give that congregation something to take away for the week more than I hear now, but I'm not able to do that.

Lizbeth strongly identifies with feminism, which she claims is about

> gender and equality. It is around the gifts and strengths that women bring that have been undervalued, in political, economic, religious and most areas of life, and it is around the regaining of that equality, and I think gender discrimination and equality is deeply embedded within our structures still.

Lizbeth understands that all people are made 'in the image of God' and are called into 'the fullness of who we are born as people of God'. Exasperated with the lack of progress towards equality and dignity for women, she says the following:

> We actually have to get on with it, and to some extent we are. You know, I think in a broader perspective, the "MeToo" movement, the way that religious women at the moment are coming out and saying, "Well, actually, yes, our women have been raped by clergy", you know, et cetera. There's vocal confirmation of it. There has to come a reconciliation and a truth telling on what has been done to women on our Church.

8.8 Sexism, misogyny, and clericalism

In this, and the previous chapter, I have told many stories of exclusion, disempowerment, and distress experienced by Gen X women simply because they are women in Catholicism. For instance, Lizbeth highlights the vulnerability of women as she tries to reconcile her deep faith with structures and systems in Catholicism that undervalue women and their gifts and skills. Nanette struggles with recognisability, and in despair, she asks herself "Where am I in this?" Libby, giving voice to her vulnerability, asserts:

> In terms of disengagement … it is the crushingly, overwhelmingly male nature of the Catholic Church and the refusal to surrender any power or influence that had a big influence on me disengaging … I feel like the Church does not exist for women really.

The subjugation of Gen X women in Catholicism is multi-layered. Catholicism has embedded hierarchical structures of oppression, 'clergy over laity, men over women, religious over secular' (Hunt 2020, p. 3).

Ingrained gendered prejudices inform Gen X women's everyday encounters in Catholicism. Sexism involves harassing or treating a person unfairly on the basis of their sex (AHRC n.d.). Misogyny is an ideology and social practice where women face hostility and animosity in social systems dominated by a culture of masculinity simply because they are women (Manne 2018). Kate Manne (2018) argues, misogyny upholds the moral or social order in patriarchal social systems and institutions in the following way:

> by visiting hostile or adverse social consequences on a certain (more or less circumscribed) class of girls or women to enforce and police social norms that are gendered either in theory (i.e., content) or in practice (i.e., norm enforcement mechanisms) … both the content of the norms themselves and the mechanisms of enforcement may vary widely, depending on the overall social position of differently situated girls and women. (p. 13)

For most of the Gen X women interviewed for this research project, sexism and misogyny are embedded in their everyday interactions with hierarchical and clerical structures in Catholicism. For instance, Patricia contends:

> [There is] complete exclusion of the feminine outside of this absurd virginal mother figure that doesn't apply in any real way to anybody … all they want is to hang onto their own power and throw their weight around and so forth … I just think it comes from terror of female sexual power … This patriarchal need to maintain the hierarchy by keeping women in their box. It's not based on any natural superiority, so of course they're paranoid … being a woman – I mean it's pretty obvious the Church manifestly regards you as a second-class citizen.

I propose that in the power/knowledge regime of official Catholicism, sexism is practised and normalised as a way of justifying and rationalising power and control over women. Misogyny thus functions to police and enforce the norms and expectations that support the subordination of women in Catholicism and to maintain the dominance of male clerical power. As forms of oppression, sexism and misogyny confirm the vulnerability of Gen X women.

Participants in this study frequently recount incidents of clericalism, where a priest's sense of entitlement and superiority combines with a devaluation of the feminine in parish life. For example, Patricia remarks:

> I think there's a problem with clericalism, I think there's a problem with only having male priests, but I think there's a problem with having priests at all I suppose. This sort of idea that someone's got the direct line to the big guy and we're going to wave our magic wand over the host here and no one else has got the same magic powers, I mean I just think that's stupid.

Gen X women report stories of abuse and harassment at the hands of clergy. Lizbeth recounts, 'I'd probably say that my parish priest is a bit of a narcissist … [priests] have conflated the sacrament of ordination with their egos'. There was a sense among participants that priests undervalue women's intellect. Prudence notes the following:

> I think it is a huge problem in relation to how priests treat women. They are clueless most of them. It is as though I have nothing between this ear and this ear. … That I could possibly have read books on doctrine and spiritual reading and thought about it and have any moral information – they haven't given that one iota of thought.

Gen X women question why, as traditional distinctions between the sexes break down in secular society, women are still struggling for equality and dignity in Catholicism. For Mari, the male hierarchal structure renders women invisible and undermines their worth and dignity. She highlights her vulnerability when she says the following:

> The decisions are made by men and lots of them. And there just doesn't seem to be even a really any interest in having women participate in the high levels and decision-making structures of the Church. You can't see them there – you literally can't see them there.

Experiences of misogyny, sexism, and clericalism almost always bring about a dramatic awakening to the vulnerability women face in Catholicism.

8.9 Gaslighting

In systems and structures of power/knowledge, *gaslighting* can be used as a form of social control and manipulation over vulnerable groups or individuals. The goal of gaslighting is to gradually deny, fabricate, or manipulate a person's reality to the extent that they doubt their own memory, perceptions, and sanity, thereby rendering them dependent on the perpetrator for their feelings and reasoning (Gleeson 2018). For Catholic women, gaslighting can occur in the framing of sacred language and the obfuscation of observable facts.

For instance, in October 2020 Francis released his papal encyclical *Fratelli Tutti* on fraternity and social friendship. The title of the encyclical, literally translated from Italian, addresses "brothers" and the subheading "fraternity and social friendship" directs the focus to fraternity (from Latin *frater,* "brother") (Jurado 2020). In the opening lines of the encyclical, Francis explains that the title is a literal translation of the words Francis of Assisi used as he '…addressed his brothers and sisters' (FT, para. 1). As previously explored in Chapter Three, a complementarian understanding of gender in Catholicism establishes women as ontologically different to men. How then is it that "brother" or man includes "sister" or woman? Claims of sexism in *Fratelli Tutti* extend beyond the semantics of the title. There are 292 sources cited in the 288 footnotes in the encyclical; none are women. While the experiences of contemporary men are drawn upon, the only woman referred to directly in *Fratelli Tutti* is Mary, the mother of Jesus. Despite the obvious sexism of this exclusive language and the exclusion of women from the text and references, there have been repeated assertions from the Vatican that the title is inclusive of all humanity. Andrea Tornielli, the Vatican's editorial director, asserts 'all readers should be able to understand the title "Fratelli Tutti" with the absolutely inclusive connotation that is intended' (as cited in Winfield 2020, para. 3).

In their interviews, some women notice their vulnerability and challenge what they are experiencing. Other women struggle and constantly check their perceptions of reality. This form of gaslighting reveals the irony of wilfulness. Nanette speaks of trying to explain to a male friend about male-only language in liturgy. Despite its obviousness to her, he claims he doesn't hear it. She says the following:

> even though he's very enlightened, he's very up with all the current debates. We agree on so many things … but he is male, just doesn't get the fact that we're talking about a God that's always talked about as masculine in our formal Church … it doesn't really challenge him as such, or it doesn't leave him feeling left out … I think the difference I noticed is that to me, it's personal, and for him it's not.

Bernadette exclaims:

> When we pray on vocation Sunday for crying out loud. It is like "well okay, we are mostly women here" … "What? Who are you talking to? … Sorry? What vocation? I'm praying for others". I want to yell at them and say, "Are you Fools? Do you not see?"

Vocation Sunday invites prayer for people to take up ministry positions, yet as Bernadette observes, a church full of women have vocations that remain unseen and unrecognised. After Mass, Bernadette speaks to the deacon:

> I did speak to the deacon after Mass … because he had preached the homily and talked about vocations and everything and I said to him … "I feel like you weren't speaking to me – you just want to speak to the blokes because they can be priests – you won't even let me be an altar server". And, of course, he comes out with lots of nice platitudes and stuff and it's like "I've made my point you just don't get it".

As Bernadette challenges the obviousness of what she sees, she speaks of her vulnerability and becomes wilful.

Ruby

Ruby grew up in a Catholic family and completed her schooling and teaching degree at Catholic institutions. She regularly attended Mass until three years before her

interview. She says the following:

> [My siblings and I] were all made go to Mass … I became a Catholic school teacher; I went to a Catholic teacher's college and taught in Catholic schools. I never really questioned it, it was just the "done thing" and I brought my kids up, well attempted to, Catholic as well.

Ruby recalls never really thinking about "staying or leaving" until she encountered workplace harassment and bullying at the Catholic school where she worked. The higher she got in the hierarchy of the organisation, the more disillusioned she became.

> It is not an everyone, but it seems like the more Catholic you pretend to be the worse person you are … there was some really nasty people … and they would be the ones sitting up closest to the front of the church every Sunday giving out Holy Communion and I just used to sit there and because I knew the inner sanctum and the inner workings of what went on behind closed doors what they said about people … they were two-faced … I just didn't agree with the way that they treated people.

As her interview continues, Ruby explains how her brother was a victim/survivor of CPCSA. She describes an incident where allegations of grooming were made against an employee at her workplace. She contends, 'everybody hushed it … I kept waiting for it to come up in the paper and it never did'. Reflecting on the crisis of CSA in Catholic institutions, Ruby asserts, 'it's just like a cavalcade of revoltingness and denial and I just think it's appalling'.

When I asked why she was no longer attends Mass, she reflects, 'It's not my nonbelief in a God, or being a good person or "is there a higher being?" It is the people … who got too high up in an organisation'. Yet Ruby describes her faith as 'befuddled'. She tells me how she has asked her husband not to bury her in the Catholic Church – then exclaims 'Catholic is who I am'.

8.10 Workplace bullying, harassment, and discrimination

In their interviews, participants frequently told stories of workplace abuse including sexual harassment and discrimination that occur because of their vulnerability in Catholicism. Stories of harm and suffering tended to be more painful when study

participants recount being judged by others as purposefully or persistently wilful. For instance, the experiences of those participants who have a sense of being called by God to minister in their communities were conveyed with deep sadness and distress. Earlier in this chapter, I recounted how Martha noted that even the most theologically educated and experienced female parish employee is understood in Catholicism as ontologically inferior to even a minimally prepared ordained man. This judgement that establishes women's vulnerability also renders women who minister in parish communities wilful. Martha tells the story of a colleague who was dismissed from her employment when a new priest was appointed in the parish where she worked:

> [My colleague] she got called in on the Thursday. Now she was actually preaching at Masses … because her [previous] priest administrator said to her well you are running the parish why don't you preach? She had a doctorate in theology, and she was brilliant. The new priest came in and everything changed. She got called in … she got told to pack her bag they were going to pay her out for holidays and pay her out her time of notice and she said, "can I say goodbye to my parishioners on Sunday". She'd been doing [her job] for five years. And [the new priest] said "no" .The woman walked out the door never to set foot in a church again … it was disgusting.

A recent *Australian Human Rights Commission* (AHRC 2020) report into sexual harassment in Australian workplace settings noted that a culture of gender inequity was the key power dynamic behind most instances of sexual harassment. Women who are employed as health workers, pastoral workers, counsellors, and teachers in Catholic organisations told stores of workplace abuse and sexual harassment. For instance, Billie alleges that systematic abuse occurs in her Catholic workplace:

> I work in the Church. There is abuse that is happening that they don't believe its abuse. The abuse of power. The abuse that they put down women … The abuse of power and what they do to people and how they treat people is appalling … They are very careful to be transparent in the sexual stuff but all the other stuff … I don't think they've learned much at all … I know a lot and I see a lot and I'm exposed to a lot, and I am disheartened a lot more than the Sunday Catholic who goes to church and sees the priest trying to do

> the right thing and say all the right things and then goes home. I live and breathe the place I work and the place I worship because I work in the same place. So, I am seeing it all the time. It is hard.

Ruby claims the bullying she experienced as a teacher in Catholic schools was ‘intense and hard’. She recalls being subject to moral surveillance as a young teacher in a Catholic School:

> I had to go to church each Sunday every weekend. You had to be seen if you weren't at that church you had to be at a church somewhere. And you had to live by the morals of the Church. For example, when I moved [to the town] I was offered to share this house with a guy, but I actually had to go and ask the priest’s permission to go and live with him – it was okay because his mum was a weekly Catholic person. I met my husband that year and we bought a farm … but I wasn't going able to go and live out on the farm. I had to stay in town living with the guy in town until we were married, or the school year was over … the deputy principal used to drive past my home in town to see whether my car was there are or not. So, I became very good at coming into town different ways – it was how you were seen because I was teaching at a Catholic School it meant that I had to be above reproach.

In Australia, current state and federal anti-discrimination legislation contains a category of exemptions, which permits religious organisations certain exemptions under employment law (McPhillips 2015). Thus, religious organisations such as the Catholic Church identify and claim a “right” to positive discrimination in staff relations as a fundamental component of their freedom of religion and belief (Bouma et al. 2011). In effect, this means the Catholic Church can discriminate in employment and training practices in matters related to their teachings on gender and sexuality.

I found that the exemption of Catholic organisations, especially schools, from prosecution for acts of positive discrimination is negatively impacting Gen X Women. For instance, Regina still hasn’t told her employer she did not marry her second husband in a Catholic Church. When speaking about the beauty of her civil ceremony says, ‘That's

a secret. No one knows that. I could be kicked out of my job. Possibly. I don't know'. Luanne explains how she came to resign from her permanent position in a Catholic school when she began identifying as lesbian:

> [I] resigned from … the Catholic school that I was working at because the principal wasn't particularly supportive. And I don't know whether it was explicitly my identifying – my sexual identity. He certainly wasn't supportive of the mental health challenges that I was experiencing as a result of that process and so I resigned.

Gen X women's experiences of workplace bullying and discrimination appear to occur under the guise of moral care and correction for wilful defiance of Catholic teachings on gender and sexuality.

8.11 Harm from teachings on marriage, gender, and sexuality

Gender and sexuality are central to human subjectivity and personal identity and are key aspects of everyday life. During interviews, participants in this study speak of their vulnerability and of encountering physical, sexual, or mental harm and suffering as they live out the multiple impacts of official Catholic teachings. For instance, earlier in this chapter I recounted the stories of Monica and Antonia. Grace recalls when she first realised the extent of her exclusion:

> I was attending Mass and I remember at the end of Saturday night Mass watching a deacon doing whatever he was doing fluffing after Mass and tiding up and doing a few things and I remember thinking to myself, "I could do what he's doing. I wonder, could I do that?" And I didn't know that was not the go. Anyway, I spoke to the priest at the end of Mass and said, "Can women be deacons? Could I do that?" And he said, "No. Rome says no". And it was like, a door slammed on my soul … I just couldn't believe it. I was so deeply hurt.

Already vulnerable and deeply affected by her inability to be ordained as a priest, Grace recalls the moment she realised she can no longer retain her Catholic identity:

> I read the Church's teaching on homosexuality, and I had a very, very physical reaction to it, and then I became very distressed. And I realized that I couldn't stay in the Church. And two things deeply offended me. One was that officially I was supposed to see myself as disordered and only capable of a relationship with God … if I remain celibate.

Grace describes wilfully grappling with official Catholicism's understanding of her as "disordered" and refuses to submit to any notion of herself as unrecognisable:

> I couldn't look myself in the mirror and believe that … And the other thing that offended me even more than that and still makes me angry is the line about being told that I am called to be celibate. Nobody tells anybody want their call is … I'm sorry, but nobody tells me what my call is. I will hear that deep in my being … I'm horrified that the Church would see that I was intrinsically disordered … That is my key moment. It didn't just break my heart. It nearly broke my spirit to know that that's how I'm seen and the Church that I would have given my life to sees me like that.

A number of participants in this study raise concerns about official Catholic teachings related to sexuality and gender, including teachings that reject artificial methods of contraception, homosexuality, sex outside marriage, and deny access to methods of assisted reproduction including in IVF. For instance, in her interview, Billie recalls practising the sacrament of reconciliation the day before her wedding and being challenged for having 'impure thoughts' for her husband-to-be. She says the following:

> He is the only person I've ever had intimacy with my whole life, and I went [to confession] the day before my wedding, and I got challenged – by the priest … to stand up there and talk about how bad it is or tell me in the confessional how bad it is. … I needed to stop worrying about a dress and … start thinking about him and impure acts and thoughts.

Chloe gave this testimony:

> I can't remember which order it happened, [my brother] came out as gay. The Church doesn't like that. Then [my sister] came home with an illegitimate child. The Church wasn't so keen. My younger brother came out as gay. The Church wasn't so happy with that. He actually wanted to be a priest. Anyway, it turned out he was gay instead. Then [my younger sister] had an illegitimate child and then [my eldest brother] got divorced

> and then I had IVF. So pretty much six children, we've managed to commit a pretty horrendous sin in a different way – every child. So, really, a religion that doesn't accept any of those things wouldn't accept my entire family.

Harm and suffering is also associated with the treatment of Catholics who are divorced, separated, unmarried, or in partnerships outside marriage. For example, Gemma says the following:

> Even though I had never been married but because my husband had been and was now divorced. Even though we met long after they had been separated or whatever. I felt like I was doing something wrong in the eyes of the Church, that I was an adulterer.

The words that participants use express the depth of their vulnerability and convey how they are beginning to distance themselves from official Catholicism. For instance, Grace describes 'a door slammed on my soul'. Elizabeth speaks of "dissociation" when she tells of her sadness and isolation because of her vulnerability as a divorced woman:

> I mean, I'm divorced, and I haven't gone through the process of annulment … I don't know what's stopping me from doing that little hurdle to go and get an annulment … when I go to Mass, I don't go to Communion because I've had a relationship since my marriage broke down … there's a real sadness that goes with that and an element of dissociation … I'm just in that no-man's land sort of thing.

During interviews, participants critique processes connected with marriage annulment and remarriage. For example, Regina recalls the process of going through an annulment after her first marriage broke down:

> I went through an annulment … I went through that process which was horrible – probably months after, a year after … he left for somebody else, which is what it is … just reliving and trying to say why it wasn't a marriage. Because in my mind – I love this man. And I had children to this man, and I married this man. And yet I was rejected … It was very traumatic.

Most participants in this study were able to draw on their own or their family situations when speaking of the violence of their exclusion. For instance, Audrey recalls

her vulnerability regarding her own relationship and that of her sister who is married to her female partner. She expresses her dismay that only relationships between men and women in sacramental marriages are acceptable:

> I'm in an eleven-year relationship with my partner. We've been living together for ten years, and we're not married … Our relationship doesn't carry the same status as others … we have a very solid, strong, loving relationship. But I know that in the Church's eyes, that's a sin and that's not regarded as a good thing … [It's] kind of disappointing that [the Church] doesn't regard mine or my sister's relationship as valid or important or as loving and I disagree with that. Observing her relationship – a beautiful, solid, loving, healthy relationship. You know, one to be admired, really.

In Catholicism, teachings related to marriage do not acknowledge the validity of same-sex civil unions. In a similar manner to Audrey, several other participants in this study mention concerns and speak unhappily about how same-sex marriages are seen as unacceptable, unworthy, or somehow against God. For instance, Grace speaking from personal experience, expresses her profound grief when she says the following:

> The teaching on marriage is really hard to me because, as a person of deep faith, if I was to want to make a committed life with my [female] partner, I would really want to do that in a church. And I would want my faith community to be part of that. And I find it hard that that's intolerable to people. The concept that it would be seen as less than or an ungodly kind of commitment. Not worthy of sacrament.

A number of participants expressed support for the ordination of women. For example, Gemma, who, like Grace, is now disaffiliated, says the following:

> I guess where I have some dissatisfaction was around the role of women in the Church … it was John Paul II, he said that not only would there not be women ordained in the Church but that we couldn't even discuss it … that good Catholics shouldn't even discuss it … I remember thinking that's just ridiculous that's crazy.

Libby asserts, 'the reservation of spiritual leadership and power to men, is just ridiculous. I absolutely think if women want to become priests they should'. Ava notes:

> I'm opposed to traditional gender roles … I just think they restrict people too much … I'd like to fight for a fair world where traditional gender roles don't restrict what women or men are able to do and that women aren't discriminated against. The fact that women can't be priests has always bothered me.

Participant's vulnerability was exasperated by the hypocrisy of the teachings regarding the ordination of women and the official response to the crisis of CPCSA in the Catholic Church in Australia. According to Church law, both CPCSA and the ordination of women fall under the category of *Delicta Graviora*, or the most severe and grave "crimes" in the Church (CCL, canon. 1379). This is offensive and wounding for both women and anyone concerned with the welfare of children.

8.12 Harm from CPCSA

In the previous chapter, I recounted how the crisis of CPCSA in the Catholic Church in Australia and abroad has negatively impacted the Gen X women who participated in this study. I argued that the crisis itself, alongside the RCIRCSA and associated media reports, produced a high level of cultural trauma among participants. I suggested that several participants use interpretive adjustments to negotiate their trauma and re-shape how they use technologies of Catholicism and participate in Catholicism.

Here, I explain how some participants in this study process the harm of the crisis of sexual abuse in the Catholic Church and strive to make sense of their vulnerability. For instance, Bernadette relates how she feels about the sexual abuse of children by priests, knowing her brother is a survivor of CPCSA:

> It is not just stories that I'm hearing from other people. I have actually witnessed a human being, with no life, shattered … Listening to people and hearing their stories and knowing what the Church has done … It is a key moment because I really do get it – it is not just hearing someone's story. I am part of the story now.

Ruby's brother is also a survivor of clerical abuse. She says, 'My brother was interfered with by priests and that was a bit of an undoing'. These firsthand accounts of vicarious trauma convey study participant's feelings of despair and betrayal.

During their interviews, a number of participants struggle to articulate their experiences of abuse by priests and use evasive strategies to wilfully dismiss and avoid directly confronting the reality of their trauma. Billie and Mari remember what they understand as "near misses". Billie recalls the following:

> We had a priest that took my sister and I out. Mum was working and was saying "Oh my gosh – I don't know what I'm going to do" and he was over for dinner. He is now in jail. And he said "Oh I'll take the girls – I will take them up" … [to the mountains] for a drive. And mum went "Oh that'll be lovely" – we didn't have a choice. And we went. But we got to a [location] and he stripped down to his undies. And my sister – she remembers it vividly. I don't remember much about it. I know we said we wanted to go home, and he got really cross and made us sit in the back of the car and he drove home. He kept taking us to a different [place] and she just said "no" … and she was younger than me. And we went home and told Mum and Dad and they said, "well nothing happened" and "he wouldn't have been doing anything" and "he's a priest for goodness sake". But then he's now in jail. And my sister and I say, "someone was looking after us that day". Because if he had of touched us, we would have been too scared to go home and tell Mum. And we would be just yet another abuse victim.

Mari remembers:

> When I was in year five and year six in primary school there was this visiting priest that would come quite a lot to the school. And he always had this reputation as being good with children. And he also had as a role as kind of working with some disabled kids. And a couple of friends and I at one point looked at each other and went "We don't like Father" … And it was just sort of a real moment of revelation – "Did he do that to you?" … He used to just hold us on the chest. We were very early prepubescent girls. And he was always cuddling us in ways which we really didn't like. And something about it felt off. And I remember very clearly a few times after Mass he would gather children to him and girls and hold their breasts … And now I look back at him and go "Oh my god

> – that was in front of like our families" … It was like this gut sense of "I don't like this. Why is this adult doing this? Other adults don't touch me like this. I don't want to do it".

The type of experiences that Mari and Billie report in their interviews are often not identified as sexual abuse. Behavioural indicators for abuse can be ambiguous, requiring onlookers and children themselves to make judgements to decide if there is cause for concern (Munro & Fish 2015). Narratives about gender and sexuality in Catholicism can impact whether victims/survivors disclose CPCSA (RCIRCSA 2017b). Female victims/survivors can attach stigma and feelings of shame and self-blame to experiences, which induces self-silencing (Blakemore et al. 2017). Women and girls shoulder 'the burden of responsibility for their victimization and repercussions of telling' (Alaggia 2005, p. 465). Indeed, Mary Marcel (2007) notes:

> In researching cases of sexual abuse by Catholic priests for the last five years, I have never yet come across a case where a priest suggested that the sexual contact was the boy's idea. The converse, however, is not true. In several cases women have reported being told by their abusers that they would be assumed to have initiated the contact, vitiating their perpetrators' guilt. (p. 509)

When women internalise self-blame and shame, they can bear the responsibility of their own vulnerability.

8.13 Abuse perpetrated by nuns

The RCIRCSA revealed that not all historical CSA in Catholic institutions was perpetrated by males; the final report claimed that of the known alleged perpetrators one in twenty (5 per cent) were nuns (RCIRCSA 2017b, p. 82). In this study, a few participants told of their own or other women's experiences of physical and psychological violence perpetrated by nuns. Ruby describes the nuns who taught her as "unfair" and says the following:

> there is not a lot I remember about Primary School; I do know that every time I played a note wrong on the piano, I got hit with a ruler over the knuckles by Sister Philippa.[22] … I also remember when the time came to do confirmation, we had to know the green catechism book backwards, frontwards, and upside down because [the nuns] told us that when the bishop came and asked us a question, if we got it wrong, we weren't allowed to be confirmed … I was scared, absolutely petrified.

Martha expresses that she remains Catholic despite the abuse she experienced during her schooling:

> [The nuns] were all about judgment and the wrath of God … They were very quick to hit children. There was quite a lot of physical abuse … it was never really warranted but sometimes it was really out of place. They were quite hostile at times. They were very quick to cane children.

Antonia tells the story of how her mother was physically, verbally, and psychologically abused while boarding at a Catholic girl's school:

> My parents both went to boarding school, different boarding schools, and my mum … had some horrific situations with the nuns … Mum's experience was pretty nasty she had a horrible time … She had a lot of health issues … she wasn't always very well, and she copped a lot of abuse … She got rapped over the knuckles and a lot of instantaneous physical stuff – nothing sexual … she got yelled at a lot and put down and told that she would be nothing and stupid … she was told she wouldn't amount to anything. A lot of verbal abuse and mental anguish.

Nora recalls a lot of gossip about abusive nuns during her schooling:

> I guess I wouldn't know the extent of [abuse by nuns] because it is all just gossip more than anything … in my [year group] some of the mother's went to the same boarding school … We had a mistress of discipline, and they would always complain that they got locked in the cupboard to be disciplined … I guess that's just what happened. I never experienced it myself.

[22] Name changed.

The RCIRCSA only investigated instances of sexual abuse. To date there have been no extensive studies of non-sexual nun abuse experienced by girls in Catholic institutions.

8.14 Naming women's harm and suffering in Catholicism

In their *Declaration on the elimination of violence against women*, the *United Nations* (UN) (1993) defines violence against women in the following way:

> any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life. (p. 3)

Furthermore, they state:

> Women are entitled to the equal enjoyment and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field. These rights include, inter alia: (a) The right to life; (b) The right to equality. (UN 1993, p. 3)

As participants in this study told their stories, however, despite frequently describing instances of discrimination and harassment, they did not name their harm as abuse or a violation of their human rights.

In a *kyriarchy*, such of the Catholic Church, where maleness is normative and the embodiment of women is ignored, it can be difficult for women to recognise and name their experiences. Carol P. Christ (1980) observes that when women's stories are not told:

> Instead of recognizing their own experiences, giving names to their feelings and celebrating their perceptions of the world, women have often supressed and denied them. When stories a woman reads or hears do not validate what she feels or thinks, she is confused. She may wonder if her feelings are wrong. She may even deny to herself that she feels what she feels. (p. 5)

In *Sister outsider*, Audre Lorde (2007) writes that 'racism and sexism are grown-up words' (p. 148), meaning that marginalised groups, including women, encounter the violence of racism and sexism before they have words to articulate or make sense of what they encounter (Ahmed 2017). Being unable to comprehend or articulate everyday experiences can make women retrospective witnesses to their own stories. Ahmed (2017) contends:

> Sometimes: surviving the relentlessness of sexism as well as racism might require that you shrug it off, by not naming it, or even by learning not to experience those actions as violations of your own body; learning to expect that violence as just part of ordinary life; making that fatalism your fate. Sometimes: we have to teach ourselves not to shrug things off, knowing full well that by not doing something we will be perceived as doing too much … when you name something as sexist or as racist you are making that thing more tangible so it might be more easily communicated to others. But for those who do not have a sense of the racism and sexism you are talking about, to bring them up is to bring them into existence. (pp. 36-7)

To name experiences of discrimination and harassment risks vulnerability, further judgements of wilfulness, and potentially further suppression. This is the experience of Catholic feminist movements when they dare to name their oppression.

8.15 Everyday spiritual abuse

In UK research, three quarters of Christian church members surveyed reported feeling "damaged" by experiences associated with their church membership; some named their experience "spiritual abuse" (Oakley, Kinmond & Humphreys 2018). Given the widespread spiritual harm caused by the tragedy of CPCSA in Catholic institutions to both affected individuals (McPhillips 2018) and their families, parishes, local communities and indeed the nation (McPhillips 2017c) and the multifaceted violence experienced by participants and described here, it could be expected that Catholics in Australia might report similar experiences of spiritual abuse.

Spiritual abuse is a relatively new term and there is a growing need for a clear definition so that reporting can catch up with policy, intervention, and response (Oakley, Kinmond & Humphreys 2018). For instance, the Catholic Church in Australia has developed standards and protocols regarding the reporting of sexual abuse of children and vulnerable adults. However, in 2016, only one in twenty (5 per cent) Catholic Mass attendees reported having detailed knowledge of the safeguards and procedures that the Catholic Church has put in place to eradicate CPCSA (Dixon & Reid 2018, p. 25). Furthermore, current policies and definitions used by Australian Catholic Safeguarding Limited (ACSL) only consider children as potential victims of spiritual abuse (ACSL n.d.). Indeed, in their glossary, spiritual abuse is defined as:

> the abuse of a child that is perpetrated by an individual in a position of authority and trust within the Church, supposedly representing in the name of God. It can cause a child to have lifelong loss of faith and/or feel dislocated from the Church. (ACSL n.d., n.p.)

Catholic women in Australia have only recently begun to acknowledge and name their experiences of spiritualised abuse. Patty Fawkner (2021) recalls her experience of being a guest speaker at an international webinar where religious sisters reflected on their experiences of obedience. She recalls the following:

> When it was my turn to speak, I said that, personally, I did not feel that I had ever been wounded directly by my vow of obedience and … I didn't have any distressing stories to tell. But I was wrong. As I began to write this article it dawned on me that I had experienced verbal sexual abuse as a young Sister. This is the first time I have named it as such. I taught in a Catholic primary school in the early 1980s when members of our congregation were beginning to replace the traditional veil and habit with contemporary clothing or "civvies". If the parish priest saw me without my veil, he would later declare from the pulpit during Mass that he had seen a "topless nun". No respect at work here! Though not as traumatic as many of the instances of abuse … I still felt humiliated, disrespected and angry. At the time, it did not occur to me to challenge the priest or ask him to desist. (n.p.)

Mary Coloe (2021) writes:

> Recently, for my professional development, I completed a module on Abuse in the Workplace called "Safeguarding Essentials". This module was prepared by the Catholic Church Insurance. One aspect described various forms of abuse: Physical, Sexual, psychological and also Spiritual. Can you recognize any of this? "Spiritual abuse is the misuse of religious beliefs and practices to manipulate, oppress, or punish a person". Examples of spiritual abuse include: Threatening punishment by God, Denying religious rites, Distorting scripture to justify improper or harmful behaviour, Refusing to provide pastoral care and resources. Isn't this the experience of women? … From the information provided in this module, "Safeguarding Essentials," I can only conclude that women have experienced centuries of spiritual abuse by church authorities. (n.p.)

During interviews, participants describe harm and suffering explicitly linked to their participation in Catholicism. I argue that these instances, which occur as women manage the gap between Catholicism and their everyday embodied reality and negotiate material and structural inequalities in Catholicism, are best understood as a form of spiritual abuse.

Lisa Oakley (2018) defines spiritual abuse as a form of emotional and psychological abuse that occurs in a religious context. She notes spiritual abuse relates to a broad range of punitive actions. These include 'manipulation and exploitation, enforced accountability, censorship of decision-making, requirements for secrecy and silence, coercion to conform, control through the use of sacred texts or teaching, requirement of obedience to the abuser, the suggestion that the abuser has a "divine" position, isolation as a means of punishment, and superiority and elitism' (Oakley 2018, n.p.). Yet, as I explain above, participants do not name or describe their experiences in these terms.

In their article on the impact of the trauma of CPCSA, Kenneth Pargament, Nichole Murray-Swank and Annette Mahoney (2008) propose spiritual trauma often triggers a process of struggle in which individuals wrestle with spiritual matters. They

contend a process of struggle can take the form of: (1) struggles related to God and the Divine; (2) interpersonal difficulties, including religious tension and conflict with family and church members and leaders; and (3) religious uncertainty, including questions and uncertainties about doctrine, and conflicts between thoughts, emotions, and actions (Pargament, Murray-Swank & Mahoney 2008). Although study participants do not name spiritual abuse in their stories, they clearly articulate the struggle of grappling day-to-day as they negotiate their embodied lives and official Catholicism. For example, in the narratives retold early in this chapter, Monica says she struggles "all the time" with living out the effects of Catholic teachings related to reproduction. There is tension with her father and priests as she grapples with how to reconcile her need for medical assistance to conceive. She is uncertain and has conflicting thoughts about the place of God and Catholic teachings and practices in her everyday life. Martha and Bernadette use interpretive adjustments every day to cope with the discrimination they are subject to their ministry workplace.

A pervasive factor of the harm and suffering expressed in participants' stories was the inadvertent ordinariness of the violence they experienced in their day-to-day encounters in Catholicism. In Chapter Two, I explored how David Hall (1997) and Meredith McGuire (2008) developed the notion of lived or everyday religion to theorise how religious and spiritual identities, beliefs, and practices are experienced in daily life both in concert with and in opposition to authoritarian discourses. Distinguishing characteristics of the violence perpetrated against Gen X women are its ordinariness, quotidian nature, and normalisation. Therefore, I name spiritual abuse that occurs in the course of ordinary, lived spiritual or religious experiences and results in spiritual struggle and emotional and psychological harm: *everyday spiritual abuse*. This naming is

important, as ‘Spiritual abuse can have a deeply damaging impact on those who experience it’ (Oakley 2018, n.p.). Ahmed (2017) argues:

> Words can then allow us to get closer to our experiences; words can allow us to comprehend what we experience after the event … Having names for problems can make a difference. Before, you could not quite put your finger on it. With these words as tools, we revisit our own histories; we hammer away at the past. (pp. 32-3)

Everyday spiritual abuse takes different forms and is perpetrated against women across many locations and times.

I propose that everyday spiritual abuses are practised in the power/knowledge regime of official Catholicism as a form of *redemptive violence* against women. Here, redemptive violence refers to acts of harm and oppression that stem from ‘the belief that violence saves’ (Wink 1998, p. 42); that evil is corrected or rectified when a certain hegemonic order is imposed. Thus, everyday spiritual abuses happen via the policing and enforcement of hegemonic norms and expectations so to: (1) implement a pedagogy of correction and/or diminishment conceived necessary for salvation in Christ; (2) maintain the dominance of male clerical power; and (2) create power asymmetries that support the subordination of women. Table 4 names and describes various forms of everyday spiritual abuse experienced by Gen X women in this study. I argue that these everyday spiritual abuses are perpetrated against Gen X women, not because they are purposefully wilful, but simply because they are women dwelling within the power/knowledge regime of Catholicism. Paradoxically, for Gen X women to resist their vulnerability, when faced with experiences that involve redemptive violence, means that they must become wilful. Bodily vulnerability and wilfulness, which are organised as a way of subjugating Gen X women, however, can also be fashioned as a way of asserting existence, equality, and claiming public and private spaces.

Everyday spiritual abuses		
Abuse by nuns	The physical, sexual, spiritual, or mental harm and suffering experienced as a result of interactions with nun perpetrators.	Ruby experienced physical and mental harm from nuns during her primary school education. Antonia recalls the mental harm and suffering of her mother at Catholic boarding school.
Clericalism	Clericalism is the misappropriation of male, clerical authority which functions to set ordained clerics apart as unique, superior, and closer to God than non-clerics (Plante 2020; Radford Ruether 2005).	Lizbeth is frustrated that her qualifications are not recognised because of the conflation of ego that accompanies ordination. She is angered by the lack of decision-making power of women and the laity.
Gaslighting	Gaslighting is the process whereby a person's reality is denied, fabricated, and/or manipulated so that they question their own memory, perceptions, and sanity, forcing them to rely on the perpetrator for their reactions and reasoning (Gleeson 2018).	Bernadette questions her sanity when asked, once again, to pray for vocations when there is a church full of women ready and able to minister.
Harm from teachings on gender and sexuality	The physical, sexual, spiritual, or mental harm and suffering experienced as the result of living out the multiple impacts of official Catholic teachings.	Antonia and Monica experience psychological harm and suffering as the result of having to circumvent teachings or reproduction. Luanne seeks psychiatric help when she comes out as lesbian and is rejected by her parish community.
Harm resulting from CSA	The actual or vicarious physical, sexual, spiritual, or mental harm and suffering as a result of CPCSA.	Ruby and Bernadette suffer vicarious trauma because their brothers are victims/survivors of CPCSA.

Misogyny	Misogyny is an ideology and social practice where women face hostility and animosity in social systems dominated by a culture of masculinity simply because they are women (Manne 2018).	Libby grapples with the hostility of an overwhelmingly male environment in Catholicism. Prudence understands her priest underestimates her intelligence because she is a woman. Ruby lives with surveillance of her living arrangements.
Sexism	Sexism involves harassing or treating a person unfairly on the basis of their sex (AHRC n.d.).	Martha and Bernadette are denied opportunities for public ministry based on their femaleness.
Workplace discrimination, harassment and bullying	Workplace harassment and discrimination and bullying is repeated unreasonable behaviour and bias towards an individual or group, because of a protected attribute, which creates a risk to their health and safety (AHRC 2014).	Ruby has left her job and abandoned Mass attendance because of workplace bullying. Martha's friend is fired because she is a woman. Luanne is forced to resign when she reveals her lesbian identity.

Table 4: Types of everyday spiritual abuses

8.16 Conclusion

In Catholicism, even though the magisterium claims centralised power over what constitutes truth and a valid identity, Gen X women are not without agency. In Chapter Seven, I showed how Gen X women used technologies of Catholicism together with interpretive adjustments to form new subjectivities that are situated beyond, within, and against the official Catholic Church. In this chapter, I positioned Gen X women in official Catholicism using the theoretical concepts of monster, vulnerability, and wilfulness. I told participants' stories of misogyny, sexism, clericalism, gaslighting, workplace harassment, CPCSA, and harm and suffering associated with magisterial teachings on sexuality, gender, marriage, and ordination. I described and named these multiple forms of abuse

that stem from *kyriarchal* norms, language, and ecclesial metaphors everyday spiritual abuse. I argued that while instances of everyday spiritual abuse are the result of vulnerability and judgements of wilfulness against Gen X women, wilfulness and vulnerability also present opportunities for agency. Indeed, I contend that when women persist in the face of vulnerability, a judgement of wilfulness can result in new opportunities for agentic action. In the following chapter, I will use Gen X women's stories of how they have fashioned spaces where they can reclaim their bodies and Spirit, in conversation with feminist and womanist theologies to imagine new ecclesial spaces where women can not just survive, but flourish.

Chapter Nine: A place where Gen X women might flourish

9.1 Introduction

In the preceding chapters, I have described how Gen X women typically experience ecclesial spaces in the official Catholic Church as places of inequality, exclusion, and paradox. Indeed, I have shown that living and enacting a recognisable Catholic identity compels Gen X women to constantly respond to deeply ingrained, *kyriarchal* imagery, doctrines, and teachings that undermine their equality and dignity. I have argued that this not only establishes Gen X women's vulnerability, but also is subjecting them to various forms of spiritual abuse and redemptive violence. In this chapter, I seek to imagine a theological and ecclesial vision for church that might provide Gen X women a place to "be church" and belong to a community of faith, and flourish. I begin by exploring the ambiguities Gen X women experience in the official Catholic Church. Then I explore how women's *herstories*, in conjunction with the genealogy of feminist theologies and movements, can be used to envision an ecclesial imaginary where all women can live and proclaim a theological hermeneutic of hope, justice, and flourishing.

9.2 Gen X women "being church"

Kyriarchy is endemic in official Catholicism and is embedded in Gen X women's stories and experiences of church. In this thesis I have revealed that study participants report that "being church" means having to continuously respond to an entrenched, gendered, ecclesiology and soteriology that undermines their equality and dignity. For instance, Libby describes the Catholic Church as 'an overwhelmingly male environment'. She finds attending Mass in a Catholic parish 'very frustrating and confronting' and 'disempowering'. Sara Ahmed (2017) observes that resistance and non-conformity to

hegemonic ideology and *praxis* in a community can result in a judgement of wilfulness, which functions and feels like going the wrong way in a crowd:

> Let's think more about the experience of going the wrong way in a crowd. Everyone seems to be going the opposite way than the way you are going. No one person has to push or shove for you to feel the collective momentum of the crowd as pushing and shoving. For you to keep going you have to push harder than any of those who are going the right way. The body going the wrong way is in the way of the will acquired as momentum. For some bodies, mere persistence, "to continue steadfastly," requires great effort, an effort that might appear to others stubbornness and obstinacy, as an insistence on going against the flow. (p. 82)

The feeling of going the wrong way or having to persist is what is being described by study participants as they navigate official Catholic teachings and ecclesial spaces.

The implicit goal of official Catholicism is to compel women towards a certain type of behaviour, which is constructed by the magisterium as essential to personhood and salvation in Christ. *Kyriarchal* social norms associated with gender complementarity and the ideals of magisterial Mariology function as moral goals to implicitly guide women towards certain roles and codes of behaviour. Kate Manne (2018) explains that this type of ideology:

> enlists a long list of mechanisms in service of this goal - including women's internalization of the relevant social norms, narratives about women's distinctive proclivities and preferences, and valorizing depictions of the relevant forms of care work as personally rewarding, socially necessary, morally valuable, "cool," "natural," or healthy (as long as women perform them). Women's adherence to the relevant social roles … is supposed to look as natural or freely chosen as possible. (p. 47)

The goal of the "good Catholic woman" is put forward as personally satisfying, mandatory for salvation, morally beneficial, God given, and natural. This is empowering for some Gen X women who enact their agency by striving to perform the role of the

“good Catholic woman”. Other Gen X women are left feeling isolated and rejected. As a result, “being church” can be fraught for Gen X women.

However, when asked about church participation, most Gen X women recount stories of lived Catholicism assembled from the various discursive elements of their religious and secular lives. A large number of study participants report using technologies of Catholicism in conjunction with interpretive adjustments to find moments of hope and joy and to manage their feelings of contradiction. Libby says,

> I really enjoy the Stations of the Cross … just taking you on that journey and the reflections on that journey can be quite profound. That ceremony is so different from your day-to-day life, it does force you to stop and reflect … Things like the Requiem Mass, I think it still carries a lot of its power … in terms of that journey towards reflection on the death of a person, acceptance, the Church's teaching on the life of the world to come, I think that again is something that's quite profound.

Gen X women clearly distinguish the biblical account of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus from magisterial practices, doctrine, and teachings. Managing the gap between the *kyriarchal* ecclesiology of the magisterium and living the teachings of Jesus means that many Gen X women experience the official Catholic Church as a space of contradiction.

Church is at once the mystical body of Christ and a social assembly, structured to serve the Spirit of Christ (LG, para. 8). In Jesus Christ, God enters human history, and all creation is called into communion and community with God. Read through a feminist hermeneutic, the Gospel conveys an image and vision of church that empowers women to reclaim their baptismal call to a discipleship of equals (Schüssler Fiorenza 2002). The Gospel speaks of how Jesus transcended boundaries associated with gender and affliction that were previously used to differentiate and discriminate (Horsley 2010; Mark 5:21-43). Galatians 3 pledges all baptised in Christ are called to inclusive, democratic spaces of

freedom, in communities of shared equal rights to full participation (Galatians 3:28; Ogden 2018; Schüssler Fiorenza 2002). Several study participants use interpretive adjustments to find fulfilment and produce identities in line with this feminist vision and the life and teachings of Jesus – separate and distinct from official Catholicism. For instance, Helen reflects:

> So, something about the way that [the Catholic Church] is organised needs to change. I see the gatherings at the Vatican of all the Cardinals, and I say, "where are the women?" It sounds like a cliché. … you just see men. I don't understand it. You just see this ornate building and I think it is not Christ, like nothing about this picture is Christ-like. Just imagine Christ with a ragtag band of Israelites walking around Jerusalem there was no airs and graces. It was just walking the streets amongst the people. And you look at the picture of the Catholic Church … it's not the faith of the ordinary people - it is the faith of the elite and the scholarly and men.

Marline explains:

> I see the Church as a body of people … I see the institution as something separate and hierarchical. I don't feel comfortable with [the hierarchy]. I don't feel comfortable having some man tell me what I should and shouldn't do and what I should and shouldn't think.

Veronica suggests "being church" is living and leading by example with 'Jesus being a role model'. Violet says, 'I am trying to emulate Jesus'.

This is not unexpected. In his analysis of how power and knowledge function within social and cultural institutions, Foucault (1980) contends that the construction of dominant discourse is a site of power/knowledge that can be disrupted. Indeed, Foucault (1980) argues any site of power/knowledge is also a place of resistance. This means that no discourse is inherently oppressive or liberating with subjugated knowledges emerging in resistance to dominant discourses. Indeed, outmoded, *kyriarchal* notions of femininity, gender, and sexuality in official Catholic ecclesiologies work alongside other modes of

subjectivity to challenge and produce the agency of Gen X women. Indeed, Ahmed (2014) asserts:

> Willfulness is world creating: willful subjects can recognise each other, can find each other, and create spaces of relief, spaces that might be breathing spaces, spaces in which we can be inventive. If in most spaces we have to be assertive just to be, we can create spaces which give us freedom from that necessity. There can be joy in creating worlds out of the broken pieces of our dwelling: we can not only share our willfulness stories, but pick up some of the pieces too. (p. 169)

Therefore, even though *kyriarchal* doctrine and judgements of wilfulness can be organised as a way of limiting recognisability and subjugating Gen X women, they can also empower women.

In their interviews, study participants express a desire to "be church" in communities of faith and well-being. Gemma reflects, 'I think it's vital to have community. I don't think you can have an active faith without it'. A number of study participants look back with a sense of hopeful nostalgia on the church communities they grew up in. For instance, Patricia reflects:

> I feel a sense of loss that there is a part of my birthright that I would have hung onto could I have done it. [A parish] could be a whole community, a really enriching community, ways to be there for others who need support, within a community that celebrates and participates in a tradition that's been in my family for a long time. I'd definitely have a go if that was available.

Antonia recalls the sense of community she found in her *Antioch* group:

> They were my friends and we had all grown up in the same church and there was an understanding of what we were there for and there was a praising of God but without the demand of doing it the right way … It was a sense of belonging – very much … My father died while I was heavily involved in *Antioch*. It was a big deal to have people who were not judging the grief or anything.

In the preceding chapter, I recounted how Bernadette experiences her Catholic parish as a space that is 'not very pleasant'. By contrast, Bernadette tells the story of visiting her aunt in a convent and finding joy and community in the company of the women.

> My aunt [is a nun] she would come to the town where we lived. I would always go down to the convent … My aunt would bring me into the convent and these beautiful nuns would sit around praying and knitting or whatever and I just have these lovely memories of this beautiful space of females being together, gardening together. It sounds so twee, but they gardened together, they sat and shared their prayers together, and they were always "Oh Bernadette, you're here, it's lovely to see you!" And I always felt very welcome.

Gen X women are yearning and imagining ecclesial spaces to "be church" and belong to communities of faith and flourishing that support living a life in Jesus Christ.

9.3 A new ecclesial imaginary

The imaginary of natality theorised by Grace Jantzen (1995a, 1996, 1999, 2001, 2004) has the potential to be a theoretical-practical framework for an ecclesial imaginary that supports Gen X women's flourishing. In Jantzen's (1999) conceptualisation of an imaginary of natality, she locates the blame for *kyriarchy* and redemptive violence in the underlying theological imaginary of death that is prevalent in western Christianities. She observes, as follows:

> To the extent … that the symbolic of death permeates … assumptions about gender are never far away. And since the efforts of mastery which manifest themselves in sexism are closely connected with the desire to master (m)others, the need to conquer death is also imbricated in racism, colonialism, homophobia and other forms of dominance. Conversely, if the misogyny and need for domination, conscious and unconscious … is to be disrupted, it is essential that the imaginary should be released from its servitude to the hegemony of the symbolic of death. (Jantzen 1999, p. 133)

Jantzen (1999) finds the concept or idiom of salvation that is prominent in western masculinist theologies and manifests in doctrine 'is in fact imbricated in an imaginary of death' (p. 159). As a remedy, she proposes an imaginary of natality that invites a symbolic of flourishing.

Jantzen (1996, 1999) argues the distinction between a symbolic of flourishing and a symbolic of salvation is stark and gendered. The patriarchal understanding of salvation is linked to the sacrifice of the person Jesus Christ and the human condition. Herein, the paradigms projected onto women act three-fold. First, for women, sacrifice is linked to the negative qualities of victimhood. Second, the Catholic fixation on the maleness of Jesus leaves women unable to image the saviour. Mary Daly (1973) explains, as follows:

> The qualities that Christianity *idealizes*, especially for women, are also those of a victim: sacrificial love, passive acceptance of suffering, humiliation, meekness, etc. Since these are the qualities idealized in Jesus "who died for our sin," his functioning as a model reinforces the scapegoat syndrome for women. Given the victimized situation of the female in sexist society, these "virtues" are hardly the qualities that women should be encouraged to have. Moreover, since women cannot be "good" enough to measure up to this ideal, and since all are by sexual definition alien from the male saviour, this is an impossible model. Thus, doomed to failure even in emulating the Victim, women are plunged more deeply into victimization. (p. 77)

Third, in Christianity, sexuality and the female body are negatively associated with sin and temptation. Jantzen (1995a) notes, 'as Eve was the mother of sin, so the body, associated with woman, continues to be its cause' (p. 88). Moreover, salvation requires an external source or remedy (Jantzen 1995a). Indeed, a theology of salvation requires a deistic God, a male saviour external to the world entering human history from outside (Jantzen 1995a). Accordingly, a theology of salvation is a personal quest and can be adversarial as well as gender bound (Jantzen 1999). The consequences of a theology of salvation are evident in Gen X women's narratives, especially in women's stories of

harm and suffering. For instance, in her retelling of the story of her IVF journey, Monica asserts ‘I thought this isn't working because it's against God … And I still saw things in the space of reward, sin, punishment, and hell’.

By contrast, the symbolic of flourishing is a positive concept that Jantzen (1999) deploys to place humanity in community with ecology and in relationship with God who is ‘source and well-spring’ (p. 162); ‘one who flourishes is going from strength to strength’ (p. 165). Here, the term flourishing has etymological connections to nature, birth, and fruition. In the common verb form “to flourish” is to blossom and grow abundantly in prosperity and vigour (Jantzen 1996). People who flourish can thus be understood ‘as having natural inner capacity and dynamic, able to draw on inner resources and interconnection with one another, and potential to develop into great fruitfulness’ (Jantzen 1995a, p. 87). Study participants who have sought and found spaces for flourishing use language that expresses an inner capacity to find hope and well-being in moments of connection with the divine. For instance, Nanette reflects:

> I’ll often pause for a moment … whether it’s the sunset or sunrise on the train trip up and down to work or a great view. I’ve got an amazing view out my window that looks out over [the city] and the sky and you can see the weather coming in … so I guess in those moments in particular are things that really call me to the moment, to a sense of reverence and sacredness.

The notion of flourishing is not a radical or new theological vision. There are foundations for flourishing as a soteriological metaphor in scripture, doctrine, and the magisterial document *Laudato Si’*.

In scripture, flourishing is communal (John 15) and assumes the interconnectedness of people and the ecosystem; it invites healing, restoration, and renewal (Jantzen 1995a). References to the promise of flourishing are found in Hosea 14:3–7, where the love of God for Israel is upheld in a promise of flourishing. Israel will

‘blossom like the lily’ (v. 5) and ‘the vine’ (v. 7), and ‘shall flourish as a garden’ (v. 7) (Hosea 14; Jantzen 1999). In the New Testament, the vocabulary of flourishing has largely disappeared but is implicit in the parallel concepts of fullness and abundance (Ephesians 3:19-20; John 15; Jantzen 1999). The mission of Jesus presented in John 10:10 (‘I came that they may have life and have it abundantly’) provides a biblical vision of flourishing that rests in the offer of abundant life (Santos 2017). This same imagery is present in *Laudato Si’* where Francis uses the notion of communion to present a vision of church and society where humanity is radically united with creation and interconnectedness is critical to prosperity and flourishing (Edwards 2017; LS, para. 66-7).

9.4 Recovering the subjectivity of women

The promise of flourishing, healing, and wholeness in body and Spirit is present in scripture and Catholic doctrine. In magisterial theology and ecclesiology, however, the symbolics of divine father, divine son, and almighty lord and saviour justify and strengthen the locus of male normativity and clericalism in official Catholicism (Jantzen 1999). The absence of God as Spirit and the continued opposition to the use of inclusive language in official Catholic ecclesial discourses, including catechesis, liturgy, prayers, and the lectionary, can limit the ways of knowing available to Gen X women. Yet in their narratives study participants find other ways to know God and flourish. For instance, Libby does not believe in a male ‘all-powerful, all-seeing, all-knowing being’ and maintains, as follows:

> I no longer believe in God the father, God the son. I probably do believe in the Holy Spirit. I believe that there is some kind of force of goodness, a spirit of goodness … There is a force of goodness, of creation, of love that exists separately from the interactions of people and that exists in the universe. I think part of our journey is to try

> to align ourselves more with that force and tap into that force. That is how I see God, rather than God being an entity. It's a bit like the force in Star Wars, I guess.

In the case of Audrey, a positive experience of encounter with an "unknowable" divinity during a tsunami led her to disaffiliate from Catholicism when she could no longer reconcile a corrupt institutional, masculine God with what she encountered:

> I had an experience when my partner and I were caught up in a tsunami in 2009 and it was a life-threatening situation, and I had a very – and this actually might have kind of been like part of the final chapter of the decline into being a non-Catholic … We had to run from a wave and we got caught up and it was pretty devastating, and saw some pretty horrendous things, but in the moment of being caught on a barbed wire fence and seeing this huge wave coming towards me and, you know, a car and galvanised iron, and feeling so small and insignificant and like I was going to die and it just – I think after that moment, if what I thought I knew – if I thought I knew what God was, I had to completely, really rework it from that moment on, because it was this – the force of nature and the terrifying beauty and how powerful it was really, like, elevated me to this level of going, you know, there's something unknowable out there and maybe I thought I knew what it was or maybe this person that I was speaking to was it, but there's something deeper. And I actually just have to find the time to reflect on that and spend time in nature to really answer some of the questions that I have. But at this point for me, it's unknowable. The only way I can describe it is just this feeling, this presence and this feeling. So that's probably just a whole lot of mumbo-jumbos that you've got there, but I can't actually answer the question properly, but I am thinking about it.

Listening carefully to Gen X women's stories and ways of knowing discloses the alternative theological symbolic of flourishing.

Throughout the chronicle of Christianity, women have been retrieving alternative imagery and visions of church from scripture and tradition in order to speak and name the divine and their own subjectivity (Jantzen 1995b; Johnson 2002b; Radford Ruether 2005; Schüssler Fiorenza 1993, 2016). This tactic is being employed by Gen X women to enhance their faith experience and manage *kyriarchal* expectations and oppressions. Even though there is a devaluation of women's voices in official Catholic, each generation of

women has continued to speak and write theologically theology (Imperatori-Lee 2015). There is a long *herstory* and genealogy of women's ecclesiologies and theologies that sit on the margins of official Catholicism (Hinsdale 2017; Jantzen 1995b; Malone 2019). From the beginning of Christianity, women have been transcending cultural norms and sharing their theologies and ecclesiologies. Among the long genealogy of women are Mary of Magdalene who shared the news of Jesus' resurrection (John 20:18), the medieval mystic abbess and Doctor of the Church Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179), and the Beguine Marguerite Porete, who was burnt at the stake in 1310 for writing about God in the vernacular (Malone 2019). More recently, Mary Daly, Rosemary Radford Ruether, Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, Grace Jantzen, and many other women quoted in this thesis, have written prophetic feminist theologies and ecclesiologies. Together the *herstories* of study participants and this collective repository of women's theologies are subjugated knowledge, which continues to be both disruptive and constructive.

Feminist scholarship highlights the importance of finding, recovering, and telling the long *herstory* of women who have persisted or resisted (Ahmed 2017; Christ 1992). Carol P. Christ (1992) writes:

> In conscious-raising groups, in conversation, and in study, women are engaged in the immensely important and exciting task of recovering and discovering the shapes and contours of our own experience. We tell each other stories that have never been told before, stories utterly unlike stories we have learned from the culture. Finding our speech and opening our ears to hear, we are no longer forced to speak the tongues of madwomen, the tongues of ecstasy, the language of silence. (p. 230)

The feminist ecclesial imaginary proposed in this thesis is grounded in the recovery and re-telling of women's stories as the basis of church. This re-storying is central to the ongoing task of recovering women's subjectivity and using women's experiences to building new expressions and ideas of church. As the site and locus of

women “being church” and flourishing, the ecclesial imaginary is reimaged in women’s *herstories* of the divine.

9.5 A chain of memory

Gen X women’s *herstories* form part of a chain of memory that is essential to the re-storying and re-imaging of ecclesial spaces. As they tell their stories of lived Catholicism, Gen X women express how they find Christ not just in Catholic sacramental rituals and technologies of Catholicism, but in the everyday. For example, Kim walks a spiral with her family, does Tarot and her Rosary. Grace sits in nature. Nanette muses:

> I feel that I have a personal relationship with God where I can have that sense of reflecting on how I’m going with life and what I might need to do differently, without necessarily needing a sacrament to provide that structure.

Prudence explains:

> I am a busy mother … but there has been this practice of devotion … it is ongoing … you're doing the washing; you're hanging the clothes out on the line all that sort of stuff. … While I am on my own, I am engaging in some way in some form of prayer … I will pop down to the church for fifteen minutes of mental prayer …when I can't go to the church I'll go for a walk. That is my mental prayer time.

Finding God in these small moments is central to Gen X women’s sense of flourishing.

Several study participants recount an imaginary of the divine using the theism “God who is”. Participant’s imaginings of “God who is” sit in opposition to authoritarian magisterial discourse, which uses *kyriarchal* and gendered stereotypes of a male God and Christ (CCC, para. 239; Johnson 2002b; Marquis 2021). Several participants share their belief or perception of “God who is”, present and active in humanity and in creation

through various powerful metaphors and figures of speech. For example, Prudence says the following:

> well on the one hand you've got Michelangelo's God and the creation of Adam - go figure. The … God is ... Don't let me say pantheism but there is that seeing that I have [experienced] … I tell you God existed. Nature. That presence, that amazement, that wonder. That astonishing presence.

Nanette claims God as 'the divine mystery, the transcendent, the light in the world, something that is close to us but bigger, so much bigger than anything we can imagine'. Miriam declares, 'I would say [God is] more like an energy force. It's just that it's a power beyond me'. Lizbeth muses, 'a turning towards love. That's how I experience the divine'. Martha deliberates, 'a beam of light or a circle of light. A force rather than a body so that's what I think God is'.

The mystical way of God expressed by participants brings to mind the theology and language of the medieval mystics. Grace explains how one such mystic, Julian of Norwich, helped her develop her understanding of God. In Chapter Seven, I recounted the story of Grace's encounter with a "powerful woman" spirit. When I asked who God was for her, Grace claims the following:

> God is kind of a soul friend … beyond religion. God is those moments where I used to get up early and sit and watch the sunrise … and sit in the face of beauty … God is in the beauty of creation around me and in me.

Responding to a question about how she came to know God in this way, Grace reflects as follows:

> I encountered Julian of Norwich who wrote about God as mother and father and the feminine Christ, and it blew my mind. And it took me back to that experience of that powerful woman after confession that day and the beautiful story of Kwan Yin, who's powerful, who chose not to become a Buddha, because her role was to hear the cries of

> the world … At the time [of the encounter] my connection to God was Mary. But it could have been the breath of the Holy Spirit, which is feminine, Sophia.

Fourteenth century mystic Julian of Norwich writes of God as “mother-love” who births humanity and leads them to never-ending joy and eternal life (Jantzen 1995b).

In their narratives, a number of participants in this study reject the notion of the magisterium as the sole repository of truth and instead prioritise the authority of women through a religious chain of memory. Several participants speak of female role models, relating stories of how they had use other women’s interpretive adjustments as sources of inspiration and encouragement. These include aunts, mothers, grandmothers, nuns, and women from the scriptures and history such as Julian of Norwich, Saint Mary MacKillop, Dorothy Day and Mary, the mother of Jesus. For instance, Patricia retains a strong Catholic identity. When asked who influenced her participation, she reflects:

> Mum's approach was always pretty critical. She was always pretty open about what she thought the shortcomings were … I do have that distinct memory of her walking out of the church one Mother's Day Mass, where everyone else's mum was there … the priest had said something essentially about women giving way to their husbands or some stupid cliché about motherhood that she found offensive … coming from someone with no idea.

She then says the following:

> Well, [my Catholic identity] it’s overwhelmingly a cultural thing. It's a kind of a fealty of some sort I think, to my grandmothers chiefly who were very, very strong believers … It's a set of rituals that are meaningful to me as something that has been handed down and repeated through my family … that sense of constancy over time that gives them meaning beyond whether or not you actually you believe in the theory behind it.

Kim also draws on the strength of her matrilineal relationship when she cites her mother and grandmother as her greatest faith influence and describes how she draws on their strength and optimism:

> I definitely got my faith from those women … And it's the same thing. It's just I don't go to a physical church … But the faith … it's separate to the Catholic Church … Lived faith … It was just always there … there was this overarching sense of there was something else other than us and it just required faith. My grandmother had nothing… She was in the middle of the bush. She had five kids. She'd lost five of her siblings and she'd lost her mum. But she would put on a beautiful linen tablecloth and the butter would be in a dish and she'd look out the window and the five cockatoos would be in the tree and then she would go to Mass every Sunday … It was like the beauty and the reverence, and the faith were all lived and interlinked. Like the beauty of Christ was in the cockatoos, it was in the linen tablecloth… Christ in the flowers and the cockatoos and the linen tablecloth and serving others are all the same things.

Luanne, who was rejected from her parish community because she is divorced and lesbian, has developed a feminist hagiography of Mary MacKillop as a source of hope and solidarity:

> [Mary MacKillop] didn't really put up with a lot … she challenged and … when she felt like she knew that something was right, she really stood her ground. And I think that is something that I have resonated with. And you know she was excommunicated for it but still maintained her faith … I think that story was something that I sort of eventually hooked into in terms of my own story. That it doesn't matter if I don't belong in a formal sense to the Catholic Church. That doesn't mean that my faith goes anywhere. It doesn't mean that my God goes anywhere.

A genealogy of women is fundamental to both the building of an ecclesial imaginary and the discovery of spaces in which women can experience an *ekklēsia* of flourishing and togetherness away from the eviscerating culture of the masculinist Church.

9.6 Communities of change: Women-Church

In response to *kyriarchal* and clerical structures within Catholicism, feminist approaches to ecclesiology have developed. While some feminist approaches to ecclesiology seek to undermine *kyriarchal* structures and advocate for change and reform, others work to

create ecumenical communities where women can meet in solidarity and empowerment. Pioneering feminist theologians, Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (1990, 1992, 1993, 1996, 1999, 2002, 2005, 2009, 2016) and Rosemary Radford Ruether (1983, 1985, 1987, 1988, 1991, 2005) reflect extensively on the ecclesiology of these intentional communities from which the Women-Church movement developed.[23]

Feminist Women-Church ecclesiologies claim women's experiences as meaningful sources in self-understanding and, accordingly, appeal for ecclesial imagery to be a supportive of women's ministries and lives being affirmed and celebrated (Watson 2008). One conception of Women-Church finds its basis in the work of Catholic feminist liberation theologian Radford Ruether (1983, 1985, 1987, 1988, 1991, 2005). Radford Ruether (1985) recognises the official Catholic Church as an historical institution that is deeply marred by clericalism and patriarchy. She calls the Catholic Church to be in a process of liberation that involves the dismantling of patriarchal and clerical power structures that prevent women from full participation in Church life (Radford Ruether 1985, 1991).

Radford Ruether (1991) understands the Women-Church movement, a collective grounded in the experience and *praxis* of "women as the church", as the first step in the liberating process. She explains:

> Women-Church is not an end in itself but part of a liberative process. This liberative process must reconnect women with men; must reconnect people of many races and cultures with each other; must reconnect religion with society; and reconnect human society with the larger cosmic world that sustains our being. (Radford Ruether 1991, p. 230)

[23] At a conference in 1981, Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza introduced the term *ekklēsia gynaikōn*, which was subsequently translated into English by liturgist Diann Neu as "Women-Church" (Hunt 2006).

In the spirit of liberation theology, Radford Ruether's conception of Women-Church is based on church as a rediscovery, renewal, and expansion of the foundational insights of Christianity.

The ideal that the official Catholic Church can be transformed from the communal experience of a feminist collective finds its basis in two conflicting notions of church: (1) church as a male-centred and inherently patriarchal socio-historical construction; and (2) church as the redemptive Spirit-filled sect created by Jesus and his early disciples as a renewal movement within Judaism (Radford Ruether 1985). Radford Ruether (1985) proposes that 'the church cannot be defined only as historical institution or only as spirit-filled community' (pp. 32-5). Church, understood in its duality, she explains, undermines and interrupts the current clerical expression of the Catholic Church as a replication of the apostolic church structure established by Jesus Christ and therefore as the sole transmitter of redemption (Radford Ruether 1985). As an inherently patriarchal socio-historical construction, the official Catholic Church's clerical structure exists as a dialectical interaction between historical encounters and the experience of the Spirit. Women-Church, through a ministry of a discipleship of equals, can legitimately reappropriate the liturgical, theological, and administrative functions of church and reclaim church as a community of liberation (Radford Ruether 2005).

Through her scholarship, Radford Ruether challenges women to form Women-Church communities to implement a vision of liberation and recover and reclaim Christian tradition and scriptures that have been silenced by the magisterium, in part due to the oppression of women. Radford Ruether (2005) conceives Women-Church as a series of liturgical communities where women and others are able to encounter Christian community where roles and responsibilities are shared. These egalitarian, Spirit-filled communities, Radford Ruether (1985) argues, are able to draw on the gifts and skills of

all members to maintain and fulfil the plurality of liturgical, administrative, and ministerial needs. Women-Church thus conceived serves a two-fold function: (1) to provide women with a safe place to be supported and nurtured; and (2) to be a transitional community that transforms the Catholic Church by their conscience raising and political action. Understood in this way, Women-Church is not separate from the official Catholic Church; rather, it is a vehicle for transforming the Church as conceived by the magisterium. Radford Ruether (1985) elucidates as follows:

> Women-Church means neither leaving the church as a sectarian group, nor continuing to fit into it on its terms. It means establishing bases for a feminist critical culture and celebrational community that have some autonomy from the established institutions. (p. 62)

The dialectical relationship with the Catholic Church, secular feminism, and wider society enables interaction for the transmission of liberating options for a renewed, Spirit-filled, redemptive culture within the historical Church community.

The Women-Church movement as envisioned by Radford Ruether sits in stark contrast to magisterial ecclesiology, which sanctifies and mobilises *kyriarchal* clerical power. Yet even as Radford Ruether presents, envisages, and names Women-Church as the feminist spaces where women can meet, worship, and work together for change, she understands transformation from masculinist, *kyriarchal* theologies to occur in the critique and reconstruction of structures of church. Understanding Women-Church as a transformative community of the Catholic Church is problematic. Even if *kyriarchal* ecclesial structures in Catholicism are reconstructed, the underlying ecclesiology and soteriology on which they are based, remains active (Jantzen 1995a). In her feminist ecclesiological writing, Catholic feminist liberation theologian and biblical scholar, Schüssler Fiorenza (1990, 1993, 1996, 1999, 2002, 2005, 2009, 2016) develops Women-

Church as hermeneutical process and imaginary through which radical equality and liberation can be realised.

9.7 A socio-political imaginary: The *congress/ekklēsia/kosmopolis* of wo/men

Since the 1980s, Schüssler Fiorenza has developed and elaborated on the phrase, *ekklēsia of wo/men*, as the starting point and central theological concept of her feminist ecclesiology. Unlike Radford Ruether, who imagines Women-Church as a collective of autonomous feminist Christian liturgical communities whose mission is to create liberating spaces for women with the goal of influencing, and ultimately transforming, the Catholic Church and society, Schüssler Fiorenza visions Women-Church as a radical, democratic feminist space, an *ekklēsia of wo/men,* developed from a new socio-culture imaginary (McPhillips 1994; Schüssler Fiorenza 2016).

The term *ekklēsia of wo/men* points to a variety of movements and strategies that seek to dismantle and deconstruct male-centred oppressive religious-theological structures by 'reconstructing the religious heritage and theological voice of women' (Schüssler Fiorenza 1990, p. 318). In early Christian literature, *ekklēsia* referred to a community of believers who promoted a radical democratic self-understanding of community where all people shared equal rights to full participation (Schüssler Fiorenza 2002). In this usage, *ekklēsia* is more a civil-political concept than a religious ideal (Schüssler Fiorenza 2009). Contemporary women are marginalised within the official, *kyriarchal* Catholic Church with no equal rights to full participation. Schüssler Fiorenza (2002) contends that she uses the untranslated *ekklēsia* to name the irony and reality of women's exclusion and articulate a radical democratic ethos to challenge the consciousness of a male-centred, hierarchically ordered church and society.

To resist the use of *ekklēsia of wo/men* as an exclusive or essentialist space, Schüssler Fiorenza uses the inclusive and generic term *wo/man*. Schüssler Fiorenza (2002) expounds as follows:

> Qualifying "ekklesia" with "wo/men" seeks to lift into consciousness that church, society, and religion are still governed by elite white men who have been exclusive of wo/men and other servant-peoples for centuries. It seeks to communicate a vision that connects struggles for a more democratic and just church with global, societal, and political democratic movements for justice, freedom, and equality. (pp. 1094-5)

The use of wo/men explicitly challenges the use of male terms as both generic and gender specific, and deliberately invites men to "think twice" and adjudicate if they are included (Schüssler Fiorenza 2002). Wo/men signifies that there is no unified essence, or feminine quality that defines "woman". Indeed, as Schüssler Fiorenza (2016) clarifies, wo/men are not the same; they are fractured and transformed by structures of oppression.

In practical terms, Schüssler Fiorenza's notion of *ekklēsia of wo/men* seeks to focus on wo/men being visible as church in a manner that counteracts the exclusion of their theological and democratic voice. It aims to create a space for wo/men to join in solidarity with each other and harness the power of religion as an emancipatory force (Schüssler Fiorenza 2016). Morny Joy (1990) maintains:

> Her depiction of the ekklesia of women grounded in the sophia lineage, which supports a discipleship of equals, has as its primary inspiration the empowerment of women - not as participants in ritual, but as agents of their own liberation. It is, in fact, a definite rejection of church structures as they exist today in the name of a different ekklesia that once existed yet has been denied women. (p. 20)

The *ekklēsia of wo/men* is therefore not just a liturgical or ritual gathering of wo/men; it 'provides a theological source of eschatological hope for imagining and seeking' (Carbine 2006, p. 448). It can be understood as a realisation of the discipleship of equals, the promise of the *basileia* or the kingdom of God, 'God's intended world of

well-being for all' (Schüssler Fiorenza 1990, p. 331). Thus, the goal of the *ekklēsia of wo/men* is not a replacement for the official, *kyriarchal* Catholic Church or a movement set apart from secular feminism. The *ekklēsia of wo/men* strives to substitute patriarchal institutional ecclesial power with a different, liberating *praxis* that regenerates the *kyriarchal* Church into a discipleship of equals (Schüssler Fiorenza 1990).

Over time, Schüssler Fiorenza's early vision of an *ekklēsia of wo/men* has grown and expanded. Her more recent analysis extends her earlier ideas. Schüssler Fiorenza (2016) proposes a *congress/ekklēsia/kosmopolis of wo/men* as a sociocultural emancipatory imaginary, a vision that extends beyond church. The *congress/ekklēsia/kosmopolis of wo/men* envisages and names the radical, democratic feminist space in neoliberal globalisation where diverse religious and secular wo/men's movements can meet and work together 'for change and transformation in both society and religion' (Schüssler Fiorenza 2016, p. 118). Within a *congress/ekklēsia/kosmopolis of wo/men*, Schüssler Fiorenza (2016) proposes:

> The Divine image is neither male nor female, white nor black, rich nor poor, but multicolored, multigendered, and more. As a richly gifted people, the *ekklēsia of wo/men* acts in the name of the world-community, the *kosmopolis*, in which religious, racial, class, and heterosexual markers no longer signify and legitimate status differences and relations of *kyriarchal* domination and subordination. As a pilgrim people, the *ekklēsia of wo/men* may fail repeatedly but continues to struggle, to live in fullness, and to realize its calling to be the radical democratic cosmopolitan "democracy to come". Such an understanding of the *ekklēsia in the kosmopolis of wo/men* as a community of "friends in struggle" envisions society and religion as a reciprocal community of support, a dynamic alliance of equals. (Schüssler Fiorenza 2016, p. 115)

The *congress/ekklēsia/kosmopolis of wo/men* is therefore at once an imagined and socio-political historical reality. It functions concurrently as an envisaged Women-Church community where all wo/men can be called to share their gifts and talents, and flourish, and a feminist political alterity where so-called secular and religious feminisms

can converge (Schüssler Fiorenza 2016). Such critical imagining is necessary, especially for Gen X women.

9.8 Women-Church movements in Australia

The 1970s through to the 1990s were a dynamic time for feminism, religion, and theologies in Australia as women in and around the Christian churches built on the successes of the second wave women's movement (McPhillips 2016). One of the earliest church-based groups, *Christian Women Concerned*, was formed in 1968 (McPhillips 2016). *Christian Women Concerned* drew its membership from across several different Christian denominations. They published a magazine, *Magdalene* (1973–87), which became a significant forum to articulate women's marginalisation and oppression in patriarchal churches. The public activism of this group led to the founding of the *Commission on the status of Women of the Australia Council of Churches* in 1973. Kathleen McPhillips (2019) asserts, 'it was the work of this Commission that paved the way for the upsurge in feminist activism in the Churches' (p. 140). In the 1970s and 1980s, Christian women formed new church-based social movements to tackle issues around inclusive liturgical language, the ordination of women, women's inclusion in leadership positions, and theological education (McPhillips 2016). Groups included: *Movement for the Ordination of Women* (MOW); the *Sydney Women-Church*; *WATAC Inc.*[24]; *Feminists in the Uniting Church* (FUN); and the *Ordination of Catholic Women* (OCW) (McPhillips 2016). The genealogy of these groups is significant for this thesis' imagining of ecclesial spaces where Gen X women can flourish.

When the Women-Church movement was founded, its goal was not to establish an institution apart from the official Catholic Church or a new feminist religion (Radford

[24] Named for *WATAC* for "women and the Australian Church" (Moore 2007).

Ruether 1985). Beginning in the 1980s, women started to gather in Women-Church communities to nurture and sustain each other with the intention of fostering 'the energies of women who have been cast aside, ignored or undervalued' (Scholl 1988, p. 5). In April 1985, a Women-Church community was established in Sydney to provide support and community for women who were interested in feminism and religion and/or spirituality (McPhillips 1994; Monro 2021; White 2007). Originally named *A Conversation on Women and Religion*, the group adopted the name *Sydney Women-Church* in 1987 (McPhillips 1994). Formed without ties to any religious organisation or denominational structure, the group was a liberating space for women who had negative experiences in patriarchal churches (McPhillips 1994). The sharing of life stories and ritualised experiences gave the group a sense of community and identity (McPhillips 1994; White 2007). *Sydney Women-Church*, however, was not without internal conflict and tensions eventually developed as the group explored how to create emancipatory spaces (McPhillips 1994). Erin White (2007) maintains that unease grew from different conceptions of the group's purpose. While some women viewed the group as a vehicle for reform, for others it was about self-education and freedom of expression. *Sydney Women-Church* was disbanded in 1997 (White 2007). The journal associated with the group: *Women-Church: an Australian journal of feminist studies in religion*, continued to be published until 2007 (White 2007).

Discussions that would lead to the formation of *WATAC Inc.* began in 1982 when representatives of Catholic religious orders met with Catholic bishops to discuss raising the awareness of issues surrounding women in Catholicism (Madigan 2021; Moore 2007). In 1984, a national committee was formed to gather information regarding the role of women in the Catholic Church (Moore 2007). After a national conference in 1988 that tabled many issues of concern, a formal organisational structure was established and

WATAC Inc. was incorporated in New South Wales (Moore 2007). Although *WATAC Inc.* has always been ecumenical, much of its activity and activism centred on bridging the divide between women and the official Catholic Church. Through the 1990s, the struggle against sexism in Catholic Church structures and theologies gathered momentum as feminist theologies developed and the official Catholic Church rejected the ordination of women (White 2007). During this time, *WATAC Inc.* worked to raise consciousness on Christian feminist issues through education and the dissemination of information in locally based groups, conferences, annual luncheons, and the publication, *WATAC News* (Moore 2007). From 2000–18, *WATAC Inc.* organised a *Women and Inter-Faith Forum* for senior high school students (Moore 2007). By 2019, however, *WATAC Inc.* faced possible disbandment as falling donations and the failure to attract younger women as members caused financial difficulties (Madigan 2021).

9.9 Growing division

Feminist ecclesial spaces and women's movements are places where Gen X women can potentially find each other, celebrate their stories, and flourish. Women-Church ecclesiologies present one way for Gen X women to contest *kyriarchal* ecclesiology and vision alternative ecclesial spaces. As they entered adulthood in the 1980s and 1990s, Gen X women as a cohort tended not to participate in feminist Women-Church groups, such as *Sydney Women-Church* and *WATAC Inc.*, which were a source of hope and collective encouragement for previous generations of women (Madigan 2021). Indeed, no participants mentioned *Sydney Women-Church*, *WATAC Inc.*, or the Women-Church movement in their interviews. The lack of engagement of Gen X with feminist Women-Church groups has been perceived by some earlier generations of women as "disinterest" (Madigan 2021).

I argue that while the underrepresentation of Gen X women in feminist Women-Church groups could be understood as “disinterest”, to represent their non-participation in this way is simplistic. I have discussed earlier in this thesis how the lure of *kyriarchal* ideology and the intrinsic rewards women receive for enacting the role of the “good Catholic woman”, operate alongside the criticism of feminism by recent papacies to make feminism problematic for a portion of Gen X Catholic women. Secular feminist discourses, a post-feminist backlash and generational differences between Baby Boomer and Gen X feminists have impacted on the participation of Gen X women in feminism and feminist Women-Church groups.

In the 1960s and 1970s, many Baby Boomer and Builder women rebelled against societal norms and played a major role in the development of feminist and civil rights movements (Everingham, Stevenson & Warner-Smith 2007). Major improvements in women’s sexual and material rights in secular society had a significant impact on Catholic women (McPhillips 2016). Baby Boomer and Builder women mobilised into church-based, feminist, Women-Church movements and produced a series of publications that raised the awareness of feminist agendas in Catholicism, including the ordination of women and the lack of inclusive language in the liturgy (Madigan 2021; McPhillips 2016). However, by the late 1990s to mid-2000s, neoliberal political agendas, falling levels of church attendance, and a growing awareness of CPCSA instigated ‘a cultural turn in the feminist politics of religion away from the big reform movements to new styles of political engagement’ (McPhillips 2016, p. 144).

During this time, counter-hegemonic feminist movements emerged, which sought to promote neoliberal political agendas and reinforce traditional gender roles (McPhillips 2016; Schüssler Fiorenza 2016). New alignments of conservative politicians and leaders

from the religious right successfully introduced religious freedom laws that enable religious organisations in Australia to discriminate against women who did not comply with official teachings (McPhillips 2016). The dualistic, feminine identity movement of New Feminism developed and promoted complementarian and essentialist theologies based on John Paul II's *Theology of the Body*. The ideology of New Feminism and John Paul II's feminine genius theology supports the subjectification of women by claiming women's subordination as essential, natural, and preordained by God (Beattie 2006; Schüssler Fiorenza 2016).

Taking place alongside the shift in feminist politics of religion in Australia was a growing discourse of generational contempt between secular Baby Boomer and Gen X feminists. Baby Boomer feminists lamented and criticised Gen X women for their lack of engagement in secular feminism. In an open letter to Gen X women, Anne Summers (1993) wrote:

> I guess we just assumed that the next generation of women, when they reached young adulthood, would stand alongside us and keep the movement, and the fight, alive. So I was at first horrified, and then mortified, to encounter during the 1980s young women who regarded we feminists of the 1960s and 70s as being utterly remote from them and their lives and ambitions. (p. 192)

In a similar way, the absence of Gen X women in the feminist Women-Church groups so enthusiastically generated by Baby Boomers proved disappointing. In an explanation of the challenges faced by *WATAC Inc.* in early 2019, Patricia Madigan (2021) notes:

> It was also recognised that WATAC was failing to connect effectively with younger women, who have often found the church "irrelevant". Many think the feminist struggle has been won and they are not likely to realise until later in their working lives that there is still some way to go. There are generational differences in understandings of

> feminism, and they are more likely to find social media platforms, plus environmental and other social justice issues more meaningful. (p. 280)

There is tension between Baby Boomers and Gen X feminists; however, Christine Everingham, Deborah Stevenson and Penny Warner-Smith (2007) argue that even though many women from Gen X 'distance themselves from the label "feminist," there is still widespread acceptance of feminist attitudes toward gender issues' (p. 131).

It is important to note that most Gen X women in this study identified as feminist. Furthermore, even when study participants distance themselves from the label "feminist", they articulate support for the equality of men and women in the workplace, including equal pay for equal work. For example, when asked if she identifies with feminism Emma says "no", then reflects:

> I guess [feminism] is to me that a bloke can't do anything for you. I am a woman and … I am very independent … but I am also not beyond a man holding a car door open for me … But you know, [male and female employees] should be on the same pay … if are doing the same jobs. Is that feminism? Or is that just expecting the right money for the right work? I don't look at that as feminism. But maybe it is.

In many ways, the current era of neo-liberal political agendas and the growing popularity of conservative ecclesial movements in Catholicism has juxtaposed to reinforce traditional gender roles and make feminism unconvincing for some Gen X Catholic women. In spite of this, even non-feminist Gen X women are aware of the issue of the marginalisation of women in official Catholicism. For instance, Prudence, Eleanor, and Veronica express distain for feminism, yet understand and critique the limitations imposed on women in workplaces and official Catholicism.

9.10 New Feminism as a movement

In this thesis, a divide has emerged between study participants who strive for and embrace *kyriarchal* ideals and those who find them highly problematic. The distinction between each group lies in their self-identification with feminism. Study participants who self-identify as feminist reject the understanding that God is male, refuse to accept *kyriarchal* doctrines and teachings, and tend not to attend Mass regularly. The cohort of study participants who do not identify as feminist are likely to accept the limitations of *kyriarchal* teachings and tend to blame feminism for life difficulties they have experienced. For instance, Prudence describes feminism as "dangerous", and Eleanor and Veronica explicitly attribute feminism for the breakdown of family life. Agatha asserts:

> I'm a feminist in the true sense of what it is to be feminine ... I'm not a feminist in terms of driving an agenda. Feminism to me means, exactly the Latin word like feminine … it's soft as in touch, in heart, delicate … motherhood is feminine.

In Chapter Seven, I explained how popes John Paul II and Francis declare any feminist claim for equality in Catholicism to be an imitation of male domination. In the 1980s and 1990s, the papal-approved ideology of New Feminism limited the reach of feminist theological work (McPhillips 2016).

In Australia, women who align themselves with New Feminism are part of the rich diversity of Gen X Catholic women. In this study, Prudence and Agatha self-identify with New Feminism. Organisations and movements that reproduce the discourse of New Feminism are attracting a number of Gen X women to their conferences and events. For instance, *Sisterhood* is a national movement that seeks to support and empower women based on the magisterium's teaching on the value and dignity of womanhood. Since 2009, *Sisterhood* has held reportedly sold-out national conferences that promise 'dynamic talks, quality sisterhood time and most importantly an encounter with our amazing God who

loves us beyond measure and pours out His grace in abundance' (Sisterhood National Catholic Women's Movement 2020, n.p.). This is not unexpected. In a study of similar movements in the evangelical church, *Hillsong*, Marion Maddox (2013) proposes that women's groups that mix conservative religious teachings and gender complementarity with women's empowerment, initially might seem out of step with society, however, their teachings on gender actually reproduce and intensify tensions inscribed in neoliberalism and the wider Australian culture.

Feminist theologies do not claim to speak for all women and there are Gen X women who find fulfilment in New Feminism and more traditionalist forms of Catholicism. I argue, however, that New Feminism is not simply a more traditionalist form of Catholicism. Rather, I contend New Feminism as a discourse is implemented by the magisterium to regulate women using normalising technologies. New Feminism reproduces and disseminates magisterial statements around femininity and gender giving legitimacy and recognisability to those who reproduce it (Beattie 2006; MD, paras. 26, 30-31). The discourse of New Feminism strategically engages feminism to limit women's agency and produce boundaries for women's self-understanding.

Women-Church groups and movements, such as *WATAC Inc.*, are church re-visioned in a feminist paradigm. They present Gen X women with the opportunity to engage in embodied communities where sacramentality is lived and celebrated in women past and present living in the image of the divine (Radford Ruether 2005; Schüssler Fiorenza 2009, 2016). In contrast to groups that promote feminist theologies, New Feminism and other more conservative Catholic movements garnered official, institutional support (Schüssler Fiorenza 2016). The co-opting of feminism by the magisterium in the rhetoric of New Feminism creates divides between women, which function to support women's subordination. Women's movements can either mirror

kyriarchy and legitimate the status quo or they can articulate an alternative vision of church and consciously deconstruct *kyriarchal* language and structures of domination, violence, and injustice.

9.11 Contesting *kyriarchy*

Throughout the history of Christianity, malestream ecclesiologies have silenced women and excluded them from positions of authority and decision-making, including ordained ministries. Feminist ecclesiologies must therefore empower women to begin to construct theological meanings and authority. A contestation of the underlying *kyriarchal* power dynamics in official Catholicism is central to any re-visioned ecclesial imaginary. Scripture and Catholic tradition can be used either to encourage flourishing or to legitimate the status quo. Schüssler Fiorenza (2016) contends:

> The imagery of both worlds – the kyriarchal world of domination, violence, and injustice, on the one hand, and of a kyriarchy-free, divine world of well-being, justice, and love, on the other – is linguistically inscribed in holy scriptures and formative traditions. (p. 121)

Therefore, a hermeneutic of critical questioning and imagining is required to enable transformation.

In a Foucauldian understanding of the dynamics of power/knowledge, even when new actions and engagements disrupt hegemonic discourses, material and structural inequalities that have become normative can continue to shape consciousness (Foucault 1980). Indeed, gender is embedded and constituted in social, religious, and political sites. Even when subjugated peoples wrest legitimacy from an existing apparatus, creating new alliances between bodies, they can still be impacted by hegemonic power relations (Butler 2018). Therefore, even when *kyriarchal* ecclesial structures are reviewed and

deconstructed, the fundamental imaginary and soteriology on which they are established can continue to be present and active (Jantzen 1995a; Schüssler Fiorenza 2016).

I argue that within and alongside any envisioned, alternative ecclesial imaginary radical democratic ecclesial spaces are needed, that are not just as places to "be church", but are also places for articulating, developing, and debating feminist theories and ecclesiologies (Schüssler Fiorenza 2016). What is required is a feminist ecclesial imaginary that is at once an ecclesial space and a socio-political movement that consciously rejects and contests *kyriarchy*. Ecclesial communities, which are built on an imaginary of natality and a theology of flourishing (Jantzen 1999) and a *congress/ekklēsia/kosmopolis of wo/men* (Schüssler Fiorenza 2016), have the potential to be places of flourishing for Gen X women. When they join with past generations of women, Gen X women are participating in a chain of feminist memory and a line of faith-filled Christian women who have a rich *herstory* of resisting hegemonic theologies and social practices towards a more just and equitable future.

9.12 Emerging feminist spaces

Gen X women who are deeply committed to Christianity seek spaces where they can affirm and live out their faith in community. A few participants mention how being part of a feminist or women's movement enables them to make sense of their experiences of Catholicism. For instance, Helen has sought out a women's movement as an alternative to a Catholic parish community. Nanette credits the women in her women's circle with helping her make sense of how she can remain connected with her faith, parish community, and Catholic identity:

> Talking to people in the [women's] circle, hearing from [them] things like, "I can't do it anymore. I need to leave. I've had enough," and trying to sort of listen, and listening to people that have heard her say that, knowing how much of a faithful person she is,

> that's been a more recent avenue of reflection for me in a sense of going, "Well, that seems way out there for me, but maybe that's part of my journey," that sort of thing. So those women in particular, most recently, I guess, have really helped me find another way, I guess, of being connected.

Luanne remains involved in official Catholicism through the school where she teaches. She describes how she engages with the Catholic feminist reform group *Voices of Faith* to make sense of her experiences:

> I follow them on Facebook. I've read a lot of their work and a lot of what they're doing, which is really incredible stuff … I've got a few pages on my Facebook that I follow and read the articles … I watch the videos and stuff.

In Australia and globally, younger generations of Catholic women, including Gen X, have begun to join together and speak out regarding women's equality and inclusion in the Catholic Church (McEwan & Gemmell 2021; McPhillips & McEwan 2020). Their involvement is part of an emerging new wave of feminist activist movements.

The public visibility of popular feminism, postfeminist sensibility, and neoliberal feminism have revitalised feminist discourses (Banet-Weiser, Gill & Rottenberg 2020). The presence of feminist hashtag movements on social media has had a profound effect on discourse around women's experiences of sexual abuse, marginalisation, and discrimination (Rottenberg 2019). The #MeToo movement surged in 2017, when actor Alyssa Milano[25] used the hashtag on *Twitter* to expose the sexual harassment and abuse of women in the entertainment industry (Colwell & Johnson 2020; Rottenberg 2019). Shortly after, the hashtags #ChurchToo and #NunsToo began to be used alongside #MeToo on social media platforms to speak out about the abuse, sexual violence, and oppression of women in official Catholicism (Colwell & Johnson 2020; McPhillips 2019). The #MeToo, #ChurchToo, and #NunsToo movement have had a global impact

[25] The phrase was originally used by activist Tarana Burke in 2006 (Colwell & Johnson 2020).

in reducing the stigma around abuse and highlighting the commonality of experiences of discrimination and harassment in Catholic ecclesial spaces (Colwell & Johnson 2020; McPhillips 2019; Rottenberg 2019).

New activist groups have formed, and existing groups have been revitalised as renewed energy for solidarity and collaboration among Catholic women is being generated. *Voices of Faith* is an initiative and international network that operates to empower Catholic women into leadership roles in the Catholic Church (Voices of Faith 2019). Since its inception, *Voices of Faith* has been inspiring women across the world to action against the issue of sexual violence and the marginalisation of women in Catholicism. In a speech given in Rome at an event run by *Voices of Faith* on International Women's Day 2018, Mary McAleese (2018) claimed:

> Failure to include women as equals has deprived the Church of fresh and innovative discernment … It has kept Christ out and bigotry in. It has left the Church flapping about awkwardly on one wing when God gave it two. We are entitled to hold our Church leaders to account for this and other egregious abuses of institutional power and we will insist on our right to do so no matter how many official doors are closed to us (n.p.).

Shortly after, in 2019, the German, grassroots movement *Maria 2.0* was formed when Catholic women, who felt that for too long, they had been marginalised within their local parish community, called a church "strike" (Strack 2020). *Maria 2.0* is demanding a gender equitable church, the ordination of women, and actions to address the crisis of CPCSA (McEwan & Gemmell 2021; Strack 2020). The network *Catholic Women Speak* continues to work together creating actual and virtual spaces for dialogue, collaboration, and theological reflection among women who choose to continue to engage with official Catholicism in the worldwide Church (Catholic Women Speak 2020). The *Feminist Liberation Theologians' Network* (FLTN), a project of *WATER* (Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics and Ritual), is an alliance of feminist scholars, ministers, and activists

that collaborate beyond boundaries set by denomination, tradition, academic affiliation, and race/ethnicity (WATER 2021). For twenty-five years, the group has provided a forum for discussion and has engaged in collaborate work women and other feminist groups around the world (WATER 2021). In 2019–20, more than forty Catholic women's groups joined together to form a global *Catholic Women's Council* (CWC), which is calling for the dignity and equality of women and girls to be acknowledged in Catholicism (CWC 2021). The Australian organisation *WATAC Inc.* is part of this alliance (CWC 2021).

New connections with local and international Catholic and ecumenical feminist reform movements such as FLTN, *Voices of Faith,* and the CWC have inspired Australian women (Madigan 2021). Since the beginning of 2020, *WATAC Inc.* membership has almost doubled as Gen X and younger generations of Catholic women look outside traditional ecclesial structures to find community and spaces where their voices are heard (WATAC 2021).[26] *WATAC Inc.* has set up its first social media presence, which includes a *Twitter* account and public and private *Facebook* groups (Madigan 2021; WATAC 2021). Despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, *WATAC Inc.* has launched bi-monthly online forums for theological discussion and dialogue: *WATAC Presents (via Zoom)* and *WATAC in Dialogue* (WATAC 2021). These are well attended and are generating renewed enthusiasm for feminist issues (Madigan 2021). In 2021, *WATAC Inc.* organised virtual and in-person gatherings of women members of the Plenary Council to build fellowship and solidarity (Madigan 2021). On International Women's Day 2021, *WATAC Inc.*, in partnership with *The Grail in Australia*,[27] launched a podcast *Australian Women Preach* (Madigan 2021; McEwan & Gemmell 2021). The

[26] The interviews for this thesis took place in 2018-19 and do not reflect the involvement of Gen X women in *WATAC Inc.*

[27] The Grail in Australia is part of an international movement and community of women grounded in the Christian faith and challenged by the teachings of Jesus (Grail Australia 2020).

Australian Women Preach podcast provides a platform for women who have a vocational call to preach (McEwan & Gemmell 2021). For Catholic women who are disillusioned and frustrated with the marginalisation of women in the Catholic Church in Australia, *WATAC Inc.* is providing a place outside rigid ecclesiastical structures where women's stories can be shared and heard.

The recent upsurge of Catholic feminist action and activism in Australia and across the world is highly significant. There is a growing awareness among Gen X and younger generations of Catholic women of the need to contest the *kyriarchal* ideologies of neoliberalism and New Feminism. For instance, Audrey highlights:

> [Feminism] means gender equality. It means finding equality, men and women being treated the same. Being paid the same for the same amount of work, being given the same opportunities. It means an end to gender-based violence, which is what most domestic violence is. It means an end to workplace harassment and the glass ceiling. It means an end to all of those things, and look, I'm not afraid of that word. It's been really hauled over the hot coals. A lot of younger women in particular don't like using it. I think people see it as a threat to their femininity if they seek to redress inequality.

As I have described earlier in this chapter, Gen X women seek Christian faith communities that encourage and enable flourishing. In ecclesiology, to flourish implies a community grounded on the interconnectedness of relationships between God, humanity, and the earth. Church is a sacrament, an arcane reality, moving toward fullness of life in the triune God (LG, para. 1). Church is located and told in the stories of creation and is embodied in women's lives. Herein, all women must be invited into ecclesial communities of justice, well-being and flourishing, regardless of their identification with feminism or their gender, sexuality, class, ethnicity, generation, or other identity; the divine is recognised in the theism "God who is".

Feminist Women-Church movements, however, cannot just be places to "be church". Feminist Women-Church movements must work actively to critique and oppose the ideologies of neoliberalism and New Feminism that prevent women flourishing. Moreover, they must actively challenge and disrupt the idea of Catholicism as a magisterial tradition past down from generation to generation through the theologies and ecclesiologies of men. Feminist Women-Church movements must work together as a sociocultural emancipatory imaginary; a *congress/ekklēsia/kosmopolis of wo/men.* They must build theologies and ecclesiologies upon the *herstories* of women past and present, mobilising existing feminist theological traditions, and developing and articulating new ones that encourage and empower women.

9.13 Conclusion

I began this chapter by highlighting that the official Catholic Church is a place of ambiguity and struggle for Gen X women. I contend that the implicit goal of magisterium and official Catholic ecclesiology and theology is to coerce women towards a certain type of personhood wherein suffering is part of a pedagogy of diminishment, which is conceived necessary for salvation in Christ. As an alternative, I proposed a feminist ecclesiology for Gen X women grounded in a theology of flourishing and an imaginary of natality. Herein, the biblical promise of wholeness and flourishing in body and Spirit is key. Feminist ecclesiology reimagined is both contained and produced in the genealogy of women's *herstories* of flourishing. Feminist ecclesial spaces are not simply places to "be church". They are radical democratic spaces of socio-political alterity; a *congress/ekklēsia/kosmopolis of wo/men* where women can work together to develop, articulate, and proclaim a theological hermeneutic of hope and justice.

Chapter Ten: Conclusion

10.1 Introduction

In this thesis, I have used genealogy as a methodological approach to respond to four research questions: (1) Do institutional formulations of Catholic identity accurately reflect the lived reality of Gen X Catholic women's *praxis*?; (2) What are the ways in which Gen X women in Australia engage with Catholicism and use ritual and *praxis* to express their Catholic identity?; (3) What principal factors contribute to Gen X women choosing whether to identify with or distance themselves from Catholicism in Australia?; and (4) What theological and ecclesial vision for church might provide Gen X women a place to "be church" and belong to a community of faith, and flourish? This concluding chapter begins with a summary of the findings of this thesis. It will then discuss the original contribution of this thesis alongside its implications for the Catholic Church in Australia, Gen X women, and sociological and theological research more broadly. Finally, any limitations of this thesis and recommendations for future research will be presented.

10.2 Summary and implications of the findings

Through an analysis of key literature, this thesis has shows that notions of Catholic identity are limited when only official institutional practices, such as Mass attendance, are considered valid indicators of identity, saliency, and belonging. As an alternative, this thesis conceptualises Catholic identities as constructions and performances of a blend of cultural understandings, individual experiences, and institutional authority. Furthermore, this thesis finds an ever-increasing disparity between the ideologies of official Catholicism and the embodied reality of Gen X Catholic women in Australia. It notes that

the magisterium's elevation of Mariology via a problematic *kyriarchal* sexualised ecclesiology gives legitimacy to hierarchical-clerical power structures in Catholicism and affirms the oppression of women.

Drawing on Michel Foucault's theories of how truth, power, and knowledge function alongside Judith Butler's theory of performativity, this thesis develops the terms technologies of Catholicism and interpretive adjustments. As a type of technology of self, technologies of Catholicism are the theoretical spaces in which women form their Catholic identities and *praxis.* Technologies of Catholicism provide a conceptual framework that can be applied to critique existing norms and values that constitute Gen X women's subjectivity and introduce opportunities for contributing to and extending practices of freedom in Catholicism. The term interpretive adjustment is conceived to name and describe the actions and hermeneutic techniques that empower women to position themselves within the power/knowledge regime of official Catholicism. Interpretive adjustments include actions and tactics of attachment and avoidance. They extend Gen X women's self-reflexivity and agency to alterations of discourses within official Catholicism and enable women to challenge perceptions of recognisability.

Using the methodological approach of genealogy, this thesis analyses data from thirty-six interviews with women who currently or previously self-identified as Catholic. It finds that Gen X women critique ecclesial structures and theology that situates absolute authority in matters of recognisability, doctrine, ministry, and institutional leadership in the hands of the episcopacy. Indeed, Gen X women resist being dominated and controlled by male clerics and use technologies of Catholicism and interpretive adjustments to construct Catholic identities within and against the terms of recognisability established by the official Catholic Church and its magisterium.

This thesis theorises that Gen X women who embrace the norms and ideals of official Catholicism and perform technologies of Catholicism as set out and prescribed by the magisterium do so in the paradigm of the "good Catholic woman". Enacting the performance of the "good Catholic woman" enables women to produce recognisability and benefit from the intrinsic rewards that accompany it. By contrast, Gen X women who have narratives where they tactically assert their own needs within and beyond official Catholicism do not achieve recognisability and consequently face vulnerability.

This thesis finds that vulnerability and the struggle for recognisability in Catholicism are associated with various forms of abuse, including misogyny, sexism, clericalism, gaslighting, workplace harassment, and harm and suffering associated with magisterial teachings on sexuality, gender, marriage, and ordination. These abuses are so commonplace among study participants that the term everyday spiritual abuse conceptualises and highlights them as a quotidian form of gendered, redemptive violence. Gen X women who are heavily involved in Catholic parishes, school communities, and organisations are the most likely cohort to experience everyday spiritual abuse. Revelations of the sexual abuse of children, nuns, and other cohorts of vulnerable adults further negatively impact Gen X women's participation and involvement in official Catholicism. The Catholic Church in Australia and worldwide faces a further a loss of credibility if it fails to address clericalism and the violence perpetrated against women in its official ecclesial spaces.

The *herstories* of Gen X women's identities and participation in this thesis provide Catholic women across generational divides with hope and the possibility of self-reflexivity and agentic actions. Fed up with the harm and suffering they are experiencing in Catholic parishes and organisations, Gen X women do leave Catholicism or create spaces to live out their Catholic identities on their own terms. Gen X women use social

justice activism and popular pieties, including Marian devotions, as interpretive adjustments to embody a different way of "being Catholic".

This thesis concludes that Gen X Catholic women need not constantly grapple with the demands of the magisterium and their archetype of what constitutes a "good Catholic woman". It proposes a feminist ecclesiology grounded in a theology of flourishing and an imaginary of natality reimagined, contained, and produced in the genealogy of women's stories of flourishing. Herein, the *congress/ekklēsia/kosmopolis of wo/men* is both a radical democratic space of socio-political alterity and a place to "be church" where women can work together to imagine, articulate, and realise a theological hermeneutic of hope, justice, and flourishing.

10.3 Recommendations for future research

The everyday spiritual abuse perpetrated against Gen X women and described in this thesis is alarming. As a Gen X woman, I have experienced firsthand the harm, suffering, and violence of being judged wilful in Catholicism. Like many of my study participants, I understood my experience to be isolated and blamed myself. In a recent meeting with a Catholic bishop where I reported being spiritually abused by my parish priest, I was asked: "Why didn't you just leave?" This statement is the language of misogyny and reflects a deeply entrenched culture of harm where the victim/survivor is blamed and shamed, and the only possible outcome is for them to leave.

The tragic findings of the RCIRCSA regarding CPCSA have resulted in a major loss of institutional trust in the Catholic Church in Australia (Dixon & Reid 2018). Between 2006 and 2016, the proportion of Australians who nominated Catholic as their religious affiliation in the Australian census dropped from 25.8 per cent to 22.6 per cent (Hughes 2017). Women's church participation is in serious decline with each successive

generation of Catholic women in Australia less likely than the previous one to attend Mass (McEwan 2018). This thesis found a deeply entrenched culture of harm in Catholicism. Every study participant had experienced some level of harm from their involvement in Catholicism; 455 segments of interview text were coded as abuse.

To fully understand the wide-spread prevalence of violence and everyday spiritual abuse in official Catholicism, future research must be extended to other genders and generations of Catholics. Study participants who identified as LGBTIQ+ reported higher levels of harm and suffering. The link between non-compliance with the gendered paradigms set out in official Catholic doctrine and teachings requires more in-depth analysis. This thesis found significant evidence of the magisterium using New Feminism as a discourse to regulate and control women. Study participants who sought to embody New Feminism in their everyday lives often expressed cognitive dissonance and distress. Further research must investigate the link between magisterial notions of femininity with everyday spiritual abuse. This research is particularly urgent among younger generational cohorts of female Mass attenders who tend to have higher levels of compliance to magisterial practices and ideals than Gen X (McEwan 2018).

This thesis reported the recent resurgence of Women-Church and other Catholic feminist groups globally and in Australia. The growth of *Voices of Faith*, *Maria 2.0*, *WATAC Inc.*, and the CWC, alongside other groups advocating for recognition of the dignity and equality of women, is occurring at a significant moment in the Catholic Church. The official Catholic Church in Australia and worldwide is undergoing a project of synodality (Hunt 2021). As part of the process, the Catholic Church in Australia will hold the final session of its Fifth Plenary Council in July 2022 (ACBC 2019b). The worldwide Catholic Church has embarked on a process of listening for its XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, which is being touted as a “synod on

synodality" (Vatican News 2021). Mary Hunt (2021) raises the possibility of these events being co-opted by the magisterium to silence progressive movements working for change in official Catholicism. This thesis has reported on the past experience of feminism being co-opted by the magisterium to silence feminist theological movements in the 1990s and early 2000s. Research must critically evaluate the processes and procedures of synodality and report on the inconsistencies and contradictions that are emerging.

There are clear signs that a new wave of feminist socio-political activism and action is rapidly gathering momentum. At the same time, there is growing urgency to record and preserve the *herstories* of Catholic feminist activism in Australia. Immediate action is needed to digitise the journals of *Christian Women Concerned*, *Sydney Women-Church*, and *WATAC Inc.* Further research is needed into the waxing and waning of Christian feminist movements in Australia and globally. A number of important questions need to be asked regarding how to: (1) to sustain feminist liberationist movements in Australia and other neo-liberal democracies; (2) develop, articulate, and communicate feminist theories, ecclesiologies, and theologies which open up the possibility of an alternative feminist future; and (3) create opportunities for and measure the potential impact of feminist theories, ecclesiologies, and theologies in terms of socio-political reform and change.

10.4 Conclusion

This thesis captures both a significant moment in the official Catholic Church and the feminist genealogy and *herstory* in Australia. Gen X women are realising the depth of their marginalisation in Catholicism. They are abandoning official institutional practices, rituals, and structures fed up with being controlled and regulated by an all-male *kyriarchal* episcopy that has permitted the perpetration of an unprecedented level of sexual violence

against children and vulnerable adults. In Australia, women make up the majority of church employees (Dixon et al. 2017) and are a significant source of unpaid volunteer labour in Catholic parishes and school communities (Powell et al. 2016). Without their active involvement, it is likely that Catholic schools, organisations, and parish communities will become unsustainable. Unless the balance shifts, and the Catholic Church abandons its gendered ecclesiology and paradigms and is open to the contributions of women as valued equal partners, it risks the trend towards reduced involvement being extended in future generations of women. This would represent a substantial change in the sociology of Catholicism and religion in Australia.

References

Abraham, Kochurani 2019, *Persisting patriarchy: intersectionalities, negotiations, subversions*, Palgrave Macmillan, Switzerland.

Ahmed, Sara 2010, *The promise of happiness*, Duke University Press, Durham and London.

Ahmed, Sara 2014, *Willful subjects*, Duke University Press, Durham and London.

Ahmed, Sara 2017, *Living a feminist life*, Duke University Press, Durham and London.

Alaggia, Ramona 2005, 'Disclosing the trauma of child sexual abuse: A gender analysis', *Journal of Loss & Trauma*, vol. 10, pp. 453-70.

Althaus-Reid, Marcella 2000, 'On not looking like Christ...', *Catholic Women's Ordination*, no. 18, pp. 2-7, viewed 1 November 2016, <http://www.womenpriests.org/theology/marcella.asp>.

Althaus-Reid, Marcella 2002, *Indecent theology*, Taylor & Francis, New York.

Althaus-Reid, Marcella & Isherwood, Lisa 2007, *Controversies in feminist theology*, SCM Press, London.

Ammerman, Nancy T 2014, 'Finding religion in everyday life', *Sociology of Religion*, vol. 75, no. 2, pp. 189-207.

Aquinas, Thomas 1989, *Summa Theologiae: a concise translation*, Timothy McDermott (ed.), Christian Classics, Notre Dame.

Armour, Ellen T & St. Ville, Susan M 2006, 'Judith Butler – in theory', in Ellen T Armour & Susan M St. Ville (eds.), *Bodily citations: religion and Judith Butler*, Columbia University Press, New York, pp. 1-14.

Ashton, Gail 2000, *The generation of identity in late medieval hagiography: speaking the saint*, Routledge, London.

Australasian Birth Trauma Association (ABTA) 2020, *Position statement: postnatal care in Australia*, viewed 30 September 2021, <https://www.birthtrauma.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/200506_Position_Statement_Postnatal.pdf>.

Australian Bureau Statistics (ABS) 2016, *2016 Census of population and housing, TableBuilder*, Findings based on use of ABS TableBuilder data.

Australian Bureau Statistics (ABS) 2017a, *1800.0 – Australian marriage law postal survey*, viewed 15 May 2020, <https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/1800.0~2017~Main%20Features~About%20this%20Release~9999>.

Australian Bureau Statistics (ABS) 2017b, *2071.0 Census of population and housing: reflecting Australia – stories from the census, 2016 – Religion*, viewed 15 May 2020, <https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by+Subject/2071.0~2016~Main+Features~Religion+Data+Summary~70>

Australian Bureau Statistics (ABS) 2017c, *4906.0 – Personal safety, Australia, 2016*, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Canberra, viewed 1 July 2018, <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4906.0Main+Features12016?OpenDocument#>.

Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (ACBC) 2000, *Woman and man: The bishops respond*, Social Justice Sunday Statement 2000, viewed 20 June 2021, <https://www.catholic.org.au/commission-documents/bishops-commission-for-health-community-service-1/513-woman-and-man-the-bishops-respond-1/file>.

Australian Catholic Bishops Commission (ACBC) 2017, *Any change to marriage law must include protections for religious freedom, media release*, 15 November, viewed 14 May 2020, <https://www.catholic.org.au/acbc-media/downloads/all-downloads/bishops-1/media-releases-1/1999-media-release-any-change-to-marriage-law-must-include-protections-for-religious-freedom/file>.

Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (ACBC) 2019a, *Bishops plenary meeting report*, November, viewed 28 June 2021, <https://www.catholic.org.au/acbc-media/media-centre/media-releases-new/2232-november-2019-bishops-plenary-report/file>.

Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (ACBC) 2019b, *Plenary Council: Listen to what the Spirit is saying…*, viewed 12 October 2021, < https://plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au/>.

Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (ACBC) 2021a, *Continuing the journey: Instumentum laboris (working document) for the fifth Plenary Council of the Catholic Church in Australia*, viewed 12 October 2021, <https://plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/PC-IL-210902-online.pdf>.

Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (ACBC) 2021b, *Fifth Plenary Council of Australia: Agenda*, viewed 12 October 2021, <https://plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Plenary-Council-Agenda.pdf>.

Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (ACBC) 2021c, *The Catholic Church in Australia*, viewed 24 September 2021, <https://www.catholic.org.au/about-us/the-catholic-church-in-australia>.

Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) n.d., *Sexism*, viewed 15 May 2021, <https://humanrights.gov.au/quick-guide/12094>.

Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) 2014, *Workplace discrimination, harassment and bullying*, viewed 19 August 2021, <https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/employers/workplace-discrimination-harassment-and-bullying>.

Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) 2020, *Respect@Work: National inquiry into sexual harassment in Australian workplaces*, AHRC, Sydney.

Australian Catholic Safeguarding Limited (ACSL) n.d., *Australian Catholic safeguarding Ltd.*, viewed 6 October 2021, <https://www.cpsltd.org.au/>.

Bacchiddu, Giovanna 2011, 'Holding the saint in one's arms: miracles and exchange in Apiao, Southern Chile', Anna Fedele & Ruy Llera Blanes (eds.), *Encounters of body and soul in contemporary religious practices: anthropological reflections*, Berghahn Books, New York.

Balthasar, Hans Urs von 1979, 'The conquest of the bride', in *Heart of the world*, Ignatius Press, San Francisco, viewed 20 July 2021, <https://www.catholiceducation.org/en/culture/catholic-contributions/the-conquest-of-the-bride.html>.

Balthasar, Hans Urs von 1980, *Mary: the church at the source*, Ignatius Press, San Francisco.

Balthasar, Hans Urs von 1989, *Explorations in theology – Vol. 2: Spouse of the word*, Ignatius Press, San Francisco.

Balthasar, Hans Urs von 1992, *Theo-drama: theological dramatic theory – Vol. 3: Dramatis personae: Persons in Christ*, Ignatius Press, San Francisco.

Banet-Weiser, Sarah 2018, *Empowered: popular feminism and popular misogyny*, Duke University Press, Durham.

Banet-Weiser, Sarah, Gill, Rosalind & Rottenberg, Catherine 2020, 'Postfeminism, popular feminism and neoliberal feminism? Sarah Banet-Weiser, Rosalind Gill and Catherine Rottenberg in conversation', *Feminist Theory*, vol. 21, no. 1, pp. 3-24.

Bartky, Sandra Lee 1990, *Femininity and domination: studies in the phenomenology of oppression*, Routledge, New York.

Baum, Gregory 2011, 'The forgotten promises of Vatican II', *Etudes d'Histoire Religieuse*, vol. 77, pp. 7-22.

Beattie, Tina 2002, *God's mother, Eve's advocate*, Continuum, London.

Beattie, Tina 2006, *New Catholic feminism: theology and theory*, Routledge, New York.

Beattie, Tina 2011, 'Mariology', in Ian A. McFarland, David A. S. Fergusson, Karen Kilby, Iain R. Torrance & Iain R Torrance (eds.), *The Cambridge dictionary of Christian theology*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp. 297-9.

Beattie, Tina 2016, 'Transforming time – the maternal church and the pilgrimage of faith', *Ecclesiology*, vol. 12, no. 1, pp. 54-72.

Beattie, Tina 2017, 'Dignity, difference and rights – a gendered theological analysis', *Louvain Studies*, vol. 40, pp. 58-81.

Beattie, Tina 2018, 'An empire of misogyny? Gender and sacramentality in contemporary Catholicism', *MicroMega: la scrittura e l'impegno*. viewed 24 June 2020, <https://pure.roehampton.ac.uk/portal/en/persons/tina-beattie>.

Beaudoin, Tom 1998, *Virtual faith: the irreverent spiritual quest of Generation X*, Wiley, San Francisco.

Beaudoin, Tom 2011, ‘Secular Catholicism and practical theology’, *International Journal of Practical Theology*, vol. 15, pp. 22-37.

Beaudoin, Tom & Hornbeck, J Patrick 2013, ‘Deconversion and ordinary theology: a Catholic study’, in Leslie J Francis & Jeff Astley (eds.), *Exploring ordinary theology: everyday Christian believing and the Church*, Ashgate, Farnham.

Benedict XVI 2005, *Address to the Roman Curia Offering them His Christmas greetings*, 22 December, Vatican, viewed December 2016, <http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2005/december/documents/hf_ben_xvi_spe_20051222_roman-curia.html>.

Bennett, Benedetta 2011, ‘Mary MacKillop: a rocky road to canonisation’, *Journal of the Australian Catholic Historical Society*, vol. 31/32, pp. 60-7.

Berry, Jan 2018, ‘Writing the self: using the self in feminist theological research’, in Nicola Slee, Fran Porter & Anne Phillips (eds.), *Researching female faith: qualitative research methods*, Routledge, London, pp. 203-16.

Beyond Blue Ltd n.d., *Perinatal Depression*, viewed 15 April 2018, <https://healthyfamilies.beyondblue.org.au/pregnancy-and-new-parents/maternal-mental-health-and-wellbeing/depression>.

Blakemore, Tamara, Herbert, James Leslie, Arney, Fiona & Parkinson, Samantha 2017, *Impacts of child sexual abuse on victims/survivors: a rapid review of research findings*, Report for Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

Børresen, Kari E 1983, ‘Mary in Catholic theology’, in Hans Kung & Jurgen Moltman (eds.), *Mary in the Churches*, The Seabury Press, New York.

Bouma, Gary, Cahill, Desmond, Dellal, Hass & Zwarta, Athalia 2011, *Freedom of religion and belief in 21st century Australia*, Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC), Australia.

Brazal, Agnes M 2021, ‘Ethics of care in Laudato Si’: a postcolonial ecofeminist critique’, *Feminist Theology*, vol. 29, no. 3, pp. 220-33.

Brock, Megan P 2010, ‘Resisting the Catholic Church’s notion of the nun as self-sacrificing woman’, *Feminism & Psychology*, vol. 20, no. 4, pp. 473-90.

Brock, Megan P 2013, ‘The nun as called by God: psychological implications in a sample of nuns in Australia/New Zealand’, *International Journal of Religion & Spirituality in Society*, vol. 2, no. 3, pp. 87-96.

Brown, Raymond E, Fitzmyer, Joseph A, Donfried, Karl P & Reumann, John 1978, *Mary in the New Testament*, Geoffrey Chapman, London.

Bullivant, Stephen 2019, *Mass exodus: Catholic disaffiliation in Britain and America since Vatican II*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Burke, Kelsy C 2012, ‘Women’s agency in gender-traditional religions: a review of four approaches’, *Sociology Compass*, vol. 6, no. 2, pp. 122-33.

Butler, Judith 1996, ‘Sexual inversions’, in Susan J. Hekman (ed.*), Feminist interpretations of Michel Foucault*, Pennsylvania State University Press, University Park, pp. 59-76.

Butler, Judith 2011, *Gender trouble*, Taylor & Francis, Florence.

Butler, Judith 2014, *Bodies that matter*, Taylor & Francis, Florence.

Butler, Judith 2015, *Why bodies matter*, 2 June, lecture transcribed by K. J. O’Meara, viewed 1 July 2020, <https://theamormundi.blogspot.com/2019/07/judith-butler-on-why-bodies-matter.html>.

Butler, Judith 2018, *Notes toward a performative theory of assembly*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge.

Butler, Judith 2020, *The force of nonviolence: an ethico-political bind*, Kindle edn., Verso, London.

Cahill, Desmond, Bouma, Gary, Dellal, Hass & Leahy, Michael 2004, *Religion, cultural diversity and safeguarding Australia: a partnership under the Australian Government’s living in harmony initiative*, Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs and Australian Multicultural Foundation in association with the World Conference of Religions for Peace, RMIT University and Monash University, Melbourne, viewed 1 October 2019, <http://amf.net.au/library/uploads/files/Religion_Cultural_Diversity_Main_Report.pdf>.

Calderón Muñoz, Maria 2014, ‘From religious icon to ‘our mother from heaven’: the appropriation of the Virgin Mary by Catholic women in Quito’, *Culture and Religion*, vol. 15, no. 1, pp. 58-71.

Calderón Muñoz, Maria 2016, ‘Finding their way to heaven: women, self-narratives and Catholicism in Quito, Ecuador’, *Social Compass*, vol. 63, no. 1, pp. 20-37.

Carbine, Rosemary P 2006, ‘Ekklesial work: toward a feminist public theology’, *The Harvard Theological Review*, no. 4, p. 433.

Carrette, Jeremy R 2000, *Foucault and religion: spiritual corporality and political spirituality*, Routledge, London.

Carrette, Jeremy R 2013, ‘Foucault, religion, and pastoral power’, in Christopher Falzon, Timothy O’Leary & Jana Sawicki (eds.), *A companion to Foucault*, John Wiley & Sons, New York, pp. 368-83.

Case, Mary Anne 2016, ‘The role of the popes in the invention of complementarity and the anathematization of gender’, *Religion and Gender*, vol. 6, no. 2, pp. 155-72.

Catholic Women’s Council (CWC) 2021, *CWC affiliated groups*, viewed 30 October 2021, <https://www.catholicwomenscouncil.org/cwc-members/>.

Catholic Women Speak 2020, *About*, viewed 30 October 2021, <https://catholicwomenspeak.com/about/>.

Cho, Sumi, Crenshaw, Kimberlé Williams, & McCall, Leslie 2013, ‘Toward a field of intersectionality studies: theory, applications, and praxis’, *Signs*, vol. 38, no. 4, pp. 785-810.

Christ, Carol P 1980, *Diving deep and resurfacing: women writers on spiritual quest*, Beacon Press, Boston.

Christ, Carol P 1992, ‘Spiritual quest and women’s experience’, in Carol P Christ & Judith Plaskow (eds.), *Womanspirit rising: a feminist reader in religion*, HarperSanFrancisco, San Francisco.

Clements, Niki Kasumi 2021, ‘Foucault’s Christianities’, *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, vol. 89, no. 1, pp. 1-40.

Clifford, Catherine E 2014, *Decoding Vatican II: interpretation and ongoing reception*, Paulist Press, New York.

Cleary, Anthony 2013, ‘World Youth Day: Wwhat difference does it make?’, *Pointers: Bulletin of the Christian Research Association*, vol. 23, no. 4, pp. 9-12.

Coblentz, Jessica 2017, ‘Ghosts in the office: the ecclesiological and soteriological implications of stereotype threat among women in Catholic theology’, *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, vol. 33, no. 1, pp. 127-35.

Coloe, Mary 2021, *Women in the Church? The time is now*, viewed 12 May 2021, <https://watac.net.au/elementor-1735/>.

Colwell, Kelly & Johnson, Sheryl 2020, ‘#MeToo and #ChurchToo: putting the movements in context’, *Review & Expositor*, vol. 117, no. 2, pp. 183-98.

Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments 2001, *Directory on popular piety and the liturgy: principles and guidelines*, Vatican City, viewed 15 July 2021, <https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccdds/documents/rc_con_ccdds_doc_20020513_vers-direttorio_en.html>.

Coogan, Michael D. (ed) 2010, *The New Oxford Annotated Bible: New Revised Standard Version with the Apocrypha*, 4th edn., Oxford University Press, New York.

Coupland, Douglas 1991, *Generation X: tales for an accelerated culture*, Abacus, London.

Cornish, Sandie & Dean, Andrea (eds.) 2019, *Still listening to the Spirit: Woman and man twenty years on*, Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (ACBC), Canberra.

Cuervo, Hernán, Wyn, Johanna & Crofts, Jessica 2012, *Gen X women and the gender revolution: pioneers or traditionalists?*, Research Report 36, Youth Research Centre, The University of Melbourne, Melbourne.

Daly, Mary 1973. *Beyond God the father: toward a philosophy of women’s liberation*, Beacon Press, Boston.

Dantis, Trudi, Reid, Stephen & Chee, Marilyn 2021, *The Australian Catholic Mass attendance report*, National Centre for Pastoral Research (NCPR), viewed 21 September 2021, < https://ncpr.catholic.org.au/wp-

content/uploads/2021/07/Mass-attendance-in-Australia-2016-Revised-July-2021.pdf>.

Davie, Grace 1994, *Religion in Britain since 1945: believing without belonging (making contemporary Britain)*, Blackwell, Oxford.

Davie, Grace 2000, *Religion in modern Europe: a memory mutates (European societies)*, Oxford University Press, New York.

Day, Abby 2011, *Believing in belonging: belief and social identity in the modern world*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Day, Abby & Lee, Lois 2014, 'Making sense of surveys and censuses: Issues in religious self-identification', *Religion*, vol. 44, no. 3, pp. 345-56.

Dillon, Michele 1999, *Catholic identity: balancing reason, faith, and power*, Cambridge University Press, New York.

Dillon, Michele 2018, *Postsecular Catholicism: relevance and renewal*, Oxford University Press, New York.

Dixon, Robert 2004, 'Acceptance of key Catholic teachings by Generation X Mass attenders', *The Australasian Catholic Record*, vol. 81, no. 2, pp. 131-43.

Dixon, Robert 2005, *The Catholic community in Australia*, Openbook Publishers, Adelaide.

Dixon, Robert, Reid, Stephen & Chee, Marilyn 2013, *Mass attendance in Australia: a critical moment*, ACBC Pastoral Research Office, Fitzroy.

Dixon, Robert, Kunciunas, Audra & Reid, Stephen 2008, *Mass attendance in Australia*, ACBC Pastoral Projects Office, Fitzroy.

Dixon, Robert, McMahon, Jane, Reid, Stephen, Keryk, George & Atapattu, Annemarie 2017, *Our work matters: Catholic Church employers and employees in Australia*, ACBC, Pastoral Research Office, ACCER, Fitzroy.

Dixon, Robert & Powell, Ruth 2012, 'Vatican II: s data-based analysis of its impact on Australian Catholic life', in *Vatican II: reception and implementation in the Australian Church*, Neil Ormerod, Ormond Rush, David Pascoe, Clare Johnson & Joel Hodge (eds.), Garratt Publishing, Mulgrave, pp. 292-320.

Dixon, Robert & Reid, Stephen 2018, *Mass attenders' response to the clergy abuse crisis*, ACBC Pastoral Research Office, Fitzroy, viewed 14 May 2021, <https://ncpr.catholic.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/ACBC-Research-Report-on-the-2016-NCLS-TJHC-Final.pdf>.

Dixon, Robert, Webber, Ruth, Reid, Stephen, Rymarz, Richard, Martin, Julie, & Connelly Noel 2018, *Understanding religious vocation in Australia today: report of a study of vocations to religious life 2000-2015*, Catholic Vocations Ministry Australia, ACBC Pastoral Projects Office, Fitzroy.

Dulles, Avery 2003, 'Vatican II: The myth and the reality', *America*, vol. 188, no. 6, p. 7.

Dunn, Shannon 2015, 'Experience, authority, and social critique: a comparison of Margaret Farley and John Dewey', *Feminist Theology*, vol. 24, no. 2, pp. 171-86.

Dux, Monica 2021, *Lapsed*, HarperCollins Publishers, Sydney.

Ebaugh, Helen Rose Fuchs 1988, *Becoming an ex: the process of role exit*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

Eccles, Janet 2018, 'Living religion: collapsing (male constructed?) boundaries between the religious and the spiritual', in Nicola Slee, Fran Porter & Anne Phillips (eds.), *Researching female faith: qualitative research methods: explorations in practical, pastoral and empirical theology*, Routledge, London, pp. 70-9.

Ecklund, Elaine H. 2003, 'Catholic women negotiate feminism: a research note', *Sociology of Religion*, vol. 64, no. 4, pp. 515-24.

Edwards, Denis 2017, '"Everything is interconnected": The trinity and the natural World in Laudato Si', *Australasian Catholic Record*, vol. 94, no. 1, pp. 81-92.

Evans, Adrienne & Riley, Sarah 2014, *Technologies of sexiness: sex, identity and consumer culture*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Everingham, Christine, Stevenson, Deborah & Warner-Smith, Penny 2007, '"Things are getting better all the time"? Challenging the narrative of women's progress from a generational perspective', *Sociology*, vol. 41, no. 3, pp. 419-37.

Faggioli, Massimo 2012, *Vatican II: the battle for meaning*, Kindle edn., Paulist Press, New York.

Faggioli, Massimo 2015, *A council for the global church: receiving Vatican II in history*, Fortress Press, Minneapolis.

Faggioli, Massimo 2017, *Catholicism and citizenship: political cultures of the church in the twenty-first century*, Liturgical Press, Collegeville.

Farmer, David 2011, 'Labouré, Catherine', in *The Oxford dictionary of saints*, Oxford University Press, viewed 28 October 2021, < https://www-oxfordreference-com.ezproxy.newcastle.edu.au/view/10.1093/acref/9780199596607.001.0001/acref-9780199596607-e-969>.

Fawkner, Patty 2021, 'Respect@Work shines a light on male-dominated workplace cultures', *The Good Oil*, May, viewed 15 November 2021, <https://www.goodsams.org.au/article/respectwork-shines-a-light-on-male-dominated-workplace-cultures/>.

Ferguson, Sarah 2020, 'Convicted paedophile Vincent Ryan confessed to a priest – then he continued abusing children', *ABC News*, 17 March, viewed 19 May 2020, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-03-17/convicted-paedophile-vincent-ryan-thinks-he-should-remain-priest/12059530>.

Fisher, Anthony 2016, 'Same-sex 'marriage': evolution or deconstruction of marriage and the family?', *The Australasian Catholic Record*, vol. 93, no. 2, pp. 145-58.

Fisher, Anthony 2021a, *Homily for Mass of Wednesday of the 26th week of ordinary time year 1*, viewed 11 November 2021, <https://www.sydneycatholic.org/homilies/2021/homily-for-mass-of-the-26th-sunday-of-ordinary-time-year-b/>.

Fisher, Anthony 2021b, *Homily for Mass of Wednesday of the 27th week of ordinary time year 1*, viewed 11 October 2021, <https://www.sydneycatholic.org/homilies/2021/homily-for-mass-of-wednesday-of-the-27th-week-of-ordinary-time-year-1/>.

Flores, Nichole M 2018, '"Our sister, mother earth": solidarity and familial ecology in Laudato Si', *Journal of Religious Ethics*, vol. 46, no. 3, pp. 463-78.

Flory, Richard W & Miller, Donald E 2008, *Finding faith: the spiritual quest of the post-boomer generation*, Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick.

Foucault, Michel 1977, *Discipline and punish: the birth of the prison*, Vintage Books, New York.

Foucault, Michel 1980, *Power/Knowledge: selected interviews and other writings 1972–1977*, Colin Gordon (ed.), Vintage Books, New York.

Foucault, Michel 1982, 'Is it really important to think? an interview translated by Thomas Keenan', *Philosophy & Social Criticism*, vol. 9, no. 1, pp. 30-40.

Foucault, Michel 1983, 'Afterword: the subject and power', in *Michel Foucault: beyond structuralism and hermeneutics*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

Foucault, Michel 1988a, *The history of sexuality, volume 3: the care of the self*, Vintage Books, New York.

Foucault, Michel 1988b, *Power, moral values, and the intellectual: an interview with Michel Foucault by Michael Bess, November 3, 1980*, viewed 25 June 2021, <https://web.archive.org/web/20150319131235/https://my.vanderbilt.edu/michaelbess/foucault-interview/>.

Foucault, Michel 1990a, *The history of sexuality, volume 1: an introduction*, Vintage Books, New York.

Foucault, Michel 1990b, *The history of sexuality, volume 2: the use of pleasure*, Vintage Books, New York.

Foucault, Michel 1991, 'On the genealogy of ethics: an overview of work in progress,' in Paul Rabinow (ed.), *The Foucault reader*, Penguin Books, London, pp. 340-72.

Foucault, Michel 1997a, 'Sex, power, and the politics of identity', in Paul Rabinow (ed.), *Ethics: Subjectivity and truth*, New Press, New York, pp. 163-73.

Foucault, Michel 1997b, 'The ethics of the concern for self as a practice of freedom', in Paul Rabinow (ed.), *Ethics: subjectivity and truth*, New Press, New York, pp. 281-302.

Foucault, Michel 1998, ‘Neitzsche, genealogy, history’, in James D. Faubion (ed.), *Michel Foucault: aesthetics, method, and epistemology*, Penguin Press, London, pp. 369-92.

Foucault, Michel 1999, ‘On religion (1978)’, in Jeremy R. Carrette (ed.), *Religion and culture Michel Foucault*, Routledge, New York, pp. 106-9.

Foucault, Michel 2003a, *Abnormal: lectures at the Collège de France 1974-1975*, Picador, New York.

Foucault, Michel 2003b, *“Society must be defended”: lectures at the Collège de France, 1975-1976*, Picador, New York.

Foucault, Michel 2005, *The hermeneutic of the subject, lectures at the Collège de France, 1981-1982*, Picador, New York.

Foucault, Michel 2007a, *Security, territory, population: lectures at the College De France, 1977-1978*, Palgrave Macmillan, London.

Foucault, Michel 2007b, ‘Subjectivity and truth’, in Sylvère Lotringer (ed.), *The politics of truth*, Semiotext, Los Angeles.

Foucault, Michel 2010a, *The archaeology of knowledge: and the discourse on language*, Vintage Books, New York.

Foucault, Michel 2010b, *The birth of biopolitics: lectures at the College De France 1978-1979*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York.

Foucault, Michel 2012, *On the government of the living: lectures at the College De France 1979-1980 and opedial knowledge*, Picador, New York.

Foucault, Michel 2021, *The history of sexuality, volume 4: confessions of the flesh*, trans. Robert Hurley, Penguin Classics, London.

Francis 2013, *General audience 18 September*, Vatican Basilica, viewed 1 January 2017, <http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2013/documents/papa-francesco_20130918_udienza-generale.html>.

Francis 2016a, *Address to the International Union of Superiors General – 12 May 2016*, Vatican Basilica, viewed 1 December 2016,

<http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2016/may/documents/papa-francesco_20160512_uisg.html>.

Francis 2016b, *In-flight press conference of his Holiness Pope Francis from Sweden to Rome – 1 November*, viewed 1 January 2017, <http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2016/november/documents/papa-francesco_20161101_svezia-conferenza-stampa.html>.

Francis 2017, *General audience 13 December*, Vatican Basilica, viewed 16 July 2020, <http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2017/documents/papa-francesco_20171213_udienza-generale.html>.

Francis 2018, *Homily 1 January*, Vatican Basilica, viewed 31 January 2018, <http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2018/documents/papa-francesco_20180101_omelia-giornata-mondiale-pace.html>.

Francis 2019, *Homily 12 December*, Vatican Basilica, viewed 25 May 2020, <http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/es/homilies/2019/documents/papa-francesco_20191212_omelia-guadalupe.html>.

Francis 2021, 'Letter of the Holy Father Francis to the prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith on access of women to the ministries of lector and acolyte, 11.01.2021', *Holy See Press Office*, viewed 30 June 2021, <https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2021/01/11/210112b.html>.

Fraser, Nancy 2005, 'Mapping the feminist imagination: from redistribution to recognition to representation', *Constellations*, vol. 12, no. 3, pp. 295-307.

Freyne, Gail 2021, 'Another attempt to mute the voices of Catholic women', *Pearls and Irritations: John Menadue's Public Policy Journal*, 13 Apr, viewed 19 July 2021, <https://johnmenadue.com/another-attempt-to-mute-the-voices-of-catholic-women/>.

Gaillardetz, Richard R & Clifford, Catherine E 2012, *Keys to the Council: Unlocking the teaching of Vatican II*, Liturgical Press, Collegeville, viewed 11 January 2018, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/newcastle/detail.action?docID=4544998>.

Garaty, Janice, Hughes, Lesley & Brock, Megan 2015, 'Seeking the voices of Catholic Teaching Sisters: challenges in the research process', *History of Education Review*, vol. 44, no. 1, pp. 71-84.

Gardiner, Paul 1998, *An extraordinary Australian: Mary MacKillop*, E J Dwyer, Sydney.

Gibson, Diane 2003, 'Getting better will take some time: the effects of social policy on four generations of older women', *Australian Feminist Studies*, vol. 18, no. 41, pp. 173-86, doi:10.1080/08164640301731

Gill, Rosalind 2008, 'Culture and subjectivity in neoliberal and postfeminist times', *Subjectivity*, vol. 25, pp. 432-45.

Gill, Rosalind & Organd, Shani 2015, 'The confidence cult(ure)', *Australian Feminist Studies*, vol. 30, no. 86, pp. 324-44.

Glaser Barney G & Strauss, Anselm L 1967, *The discovery of grounded theory: strategies for qualitative research*, Aldine Publishing, Chicago.

Gleeson, Jessamy 2018, 'Explainer: what does 'gaslighting' mean?', *The Conversation*, 6 December, viewed 14 May 2021, <https://theconversation.com/explainer-what-does-gaslighting-mean-107888>.

Goldenberg, Naomi R. 2014, 'Demythologizing gender and religion within nation-states: toward a politics of disbelief', in Niamh Reilly & Stacey Scriver (eds.), *Religion, gender, and the public sphere*, Routledge, New York.

Goldie, Rosemary 1998, *From a Roman window: five decades: the world, the church and the Catholic laity*, Harper Collins Religious, Blackburn.

Grail Australia 2020, *The Grail in Australia*, viewed 30 October 2021, <https://www.grailaustralia.org.au/>.

Grimes, Kate 2016, 'Theology of whose body? Sexual complementarity, intersex conditions, and La Virgen de Guadalupe', *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, vol. 32, no. 1, pp. 75-93.

Gross, Christi & Marcussen, Kristen 2017, 'Postpartum depression in mothers and fathers: the role of parenting efficacy expectations during the transition to parenthood', *Sex Roles*, vol. 76, no. 5/6, pp. 290-305.

Gross, Rita 1992, ‘Female God language in a Jewish context’, in Carol P Christ & Judith Plaskow (eds.), *Womanspirit fising: s feminist reader in religion*, HarperSanFrancisco, New York, pp. 167-73.

Haight, Roger 2005, *Christian community in history Volume 2: Comparative ecclesiology*, Continuum International, London.

Halkes, Catharina 1983, ‘Mary and women’, in Hans Kung & Jurgen Moltman (eds.), *Mary in the Churches*, The Seabury Press, New York.

Hall, David D 1997, ‘Introduction’, in David D. Hall (ed.), *Lived religion in America: toward a history of practice*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, p. vii.

Halter, Nicholas 2013, The Australian Catholic Church and the public sphere: World Youth Day 2008, *Journal of Religious History*, vol. 37, no. 2, pp. 261-83.

Harrington, Elizabeth 2002, *Benediction*, Liturgy Brisbane, viewed 24 September 2021, <https://www.liturgybrisbane.net.au/resources/liturgy-lines/benediction/>.

Helman, Ivy A 2012, *Women and the Vatican: an exploration of official documents*, Orbis Books, Maryknoll.

Hervieu-Léger, Daniele 2000, *Religion as a chain of memory*, Polity Press, Cambridge.

Hesse-Biber, Sharlene Nagy 2007, ‘The practice of feminist in-depth interviewing’, in Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber & Patricia Lina Leavy (eds.), *Feminist research practice: a primer*, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, pp. 111-48.

Heyes, Cressida 2013, ‘Introduction: Foucault studies special issue: Foucault and feminism’, *Foucault Studies*, no. 16, pp. 3-14.

Heyes, Cressida 2014, ‘Subjectivity and power’, in Dianna Taylor (ed.), *Michel Foucault: key concepts*, Routledge, Durham, pp. 159-72.

Higgins, Michael 2011, ‘Canonization’, in Ian A McFarland, David A S Fergusson, Karen Kilby, & Iain R Torrance (eds.), *The Cambridge dictionary of Christian theology*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p. 82.

Hill, Graham Joseph & Barker, Jen 2020, ‘160+ Australian and New Zealander women in theology you should know about’, in Graham Joseph Hill (ed.), *The Global Church Project*, viewed 26 June 2021,

<https://theglobalchurchproject.com/australian-new-zealander-women-theologians/>.

Hines, Mary E 1993, 'Community for liberation – Church', in Catherine Mowry Lacugna (ed.), *Freeing theology: the essentials of theology in feminist perspective*, Harper Collins, San Francisco, pp. 161-84.

Hinsdale, Mary Ann 2015, 'A feminist reflection on postconciliar Catholic ecclesiology', in Richard R. Gaillardetz & Edward P. Hahnenberg (eds.), *A church with open doors: Catholic ecclesiology for the third millennium*, epub edn., Liturgical Press, Collegeville.

Hinsdale, Mary Ann 2016, 'Vatican II and feminism: recovered memories and refreshed hopes', *Toronto Journal of Theology*, vol. 32, no. 2, pp. 251-72.

Hinsdale, Mary Ann 2017, 'Who are the "begats"? Or women theologians shaping women theologians', Journal of Feminist Studies of Religion, vol. 33, no. 1, pp. 91-106.

Holloway, Wendy 1984, 'Gender, difference and the production of subjectivity', in Wendy Holloway and J Henriques (eds.), *Changing the subject: psychology, social regulation and subjectivity*, Methuen, London.

Hooper, Carole 2018, 'The unsaintly behaviour of Mary MacKillop: her early teaching career at Portland', *History of Education Review*, vol. 47, no. 2, pp. 186-96.

Horsley, Richard A 2010, 'The gospel according to Mark', in Michael D Coogan (ed) 2010, *The New Oxford Annotated Bible: New Revised Standard Version with the Apocrypha*, 4th edn., Oxford University Press, New York, pp. 1791-826.

Hughes, Philip 2017, 'Some notes about religious identification in 2016 census', Christian Research Association Pointers, vol. 27, no. 1, pp. 1-4.

Hunt, Mary E 2006, 'Women-Church', in Rosemary Radford Ruether, Marie Cantlon & Rosemary Skinner Keller (eds.), *Encyclopedia of women and religion in North America: Women in North American Catholicism*, Indiana University Press, Indiana.

Hunt, Mary E 2020, 'After the smoke clears', in Debra Meyers & Mary Sue Barnett (eds.), *Crisis and challenge in the Roman Catholic Church: perspectives on decline and reformation*, Lexington Books, Lanham, pp. 1-19.

Hunt, Mary E 2021, ‘Synod or sin oddly: Vatican encourages Catholics to ‘walk together’ as long as the hierarchy leads the way and decides the route’, *Religion Dispatches*, 1 November, viewed 3 November 2021, <https://religiondispatches.org/synod-or-sin-oddly-vatican-encourages-catholics-to-walk-together-as-long-as-the-hierarchy-leads-the-way-and-decides-the-route/>.

Hurd, Elizabeth Shakman 2015, *Beyond religious freedom: the new global politics of religion*, Princeton University Press, Princeton.

Imperatori-Lee, Natalia 2015, ‘Father knows best: theological “mansplaining” and the ecclesial war on women’, *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, vol. 31, no. 2, pp. 89-108.

Imperatori-Lee, Natalia 2018, *CUÉNTAME: Narrative in the ecclesial present*, Orbis Books, New York.

Irigaray, Luce 1993, *Sexes and genealogies*, Columbia University Press, New York.

Jackson, Melissa 2015, ‘Reading Jezebel from the “other” side: feminist critique, postcolonialism, and comedy’, *Review & Expositor*, vol. 112, no. 2, pp. 239-55.

Jantzen, Grace M 1995a, ‘Feminism and flourishing: gender and metaphor in feminist theology’, *Feminist Theology*, vol. 4, no. 10, pp. 81-101.

Jantzen, Grace M 1995b, *Power, gender and Christian mysticism*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Jantzen, Grace M 1996, ‘Flourishing’, in Lisa Isherwood & Dorothea McEwan (eds.), *An A to Z of Feminist Theology*, Sheffield Academic Press, Sheffield.

Jantzen, Grace M 1999, *Becoming divine: towards a feminist philosophy of religion*, Manchester University Press, Manchester.

Jantzen, Grace M 2001, ‘Flourishing: towards an ethic of natality’, *Feminist Theory*, vol. 2, no. 2, pp. 219-32.

Jantzen, Grace M 2004, *Foundations of violence: death and the displacement of beauty volume 1*, in Jeremy Carrette & Morny Joy (eds.), Taylor & Francis, New York.

Johnson, Elizabeth A 2002a, ‘Imaging God, embodying Christ: women as a sign of the times’, in Elizabeth A Johnson (ed.), *The church women want: Catholic women in dialogue*, Crossroad Publishing Company, New York, pp. 45-59.

Johnson, Elizabeth A 2002b, *She who is: the mystery of God in feminist theological discourse*, Crossroad Publishing Company, New York.

Johnson, Elizabeth A 2006, *Truly our sister: a theology of Mary in the communion of saints*, Bloomsbury Academic, New York.

Johnson, Elizabeth A 2007, *Quest for the living God: mapping frontiers in the theology of God*, Continuum, New York.

Johnstone, Peter 2020, ‘Catholics want reform’, *Pearls and Irritations: John Menadue’s Public Policy Journal*, 30 June, viewed 30 June 2021, <https://johnmenadue.com/catholics-want-reform/>.

Jordan, Elizabeth 1999, ‘Reconciling women: a feminist reading of the history of confession in the Roman Catholic tradition’, *Australian Feminist Studies*, vol. 14, no. 30, pp. 303-13.

Jordan, Elizabeth 2000, *Reconciling women: a feminist perspective on the confession of sin in Roman Catholic tradition*, St Pauls Publications, Strathfield.

Jordan, Mark D 2015, *Convulsing bodies: religion and resistance in Foucault*, Stanford University Press, Stanford.

Joy, Morny 1990, ‘Equality or divinity: a false dichotomy?’, *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, vol. 6, no. 1, pp. 9-24.

Jurado, Mada 2020, ‘Vatican digs itself into hole trying to defend gender inclusiveness of Pope’s new encyclical ‘Brothers all’’, *Novena*, 17 September 2020, viewed 14 May 2021, <https://novenanews.com/vatican-gender-inclusiveness-pope-new-encyclical/>.

Kahl, Janet 2017, ‘An Australian our lady: the same yet different’, *Nova Religio: The Journal of Alternative and Emergent Religions*, vol. 21, no. 2, pp. 59-72.

Kamitsuka, Margaret D 2007, *Feminist theology and the challenge of difference*, Oxford University Press, New York.

Kennedy, Eugene C 1988, *Tomorrow's Catholics, yesterday's church: the two cultures of American Catholicism*, Harper & Row, New York.

Klimek, Daniel Maria 2018, *Medjugorje and the supernatural: science, mysticism, and extraordinary religious experience*, Oxford University Press, New York.

Knickmeyer, Nicole, Levitt, Heidi M, Horne, Sharon G & Bayer, Gary 2003, 'Responding to mixed messages and double binds: religious oriented coping strategies of Christian battered women', *Journal of Religion & Abuse*, vol. 5, no. 2, pp. 29-53.

Knödel, Natalie 1997, 'The church as a woman or women being church? Ecclesiology and theological anthropology in feminist dialogue', *Theology & Sexuality: The Journal of the Institute for the Study of Christianity & Sexuality*, vol. 4, no. 7, pp. 103-19.

Koziol Michael 2017, 'Catholics defy church leadership to become biggest backers of same-sex marriage: poll', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 August, viewed 28 June 2021, <https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/catholics-defy-church-leadership-to-become-biggest-backers-of-samesex-marriage-poll-20170825-gy49ea.html>.

Krebs, Jill M. & Laycock, Joseph (eds.) 2017a, 'The American Academy of Religion exploratory session on Marian apparitions and theoretical problems in religious studies (2015)', *Religious Studies Review*, vol. 43, no. 3, pp. 207-18.

Krebs, Jill M & Laycock, Joseph 2017b, 'Marian apparitions as new religious movements', *Nova Religio: The Journal of Alternative and Emergent Religions*, vol. 21, no. 2, pp. 5-12.

Leming, Laura M 2007, 'Sociological explorations: what is religious agency?', *The Sociological Quarterly*, vol. 48, no. 1, pp. 73-92.

Lennan, Richard 2010, 'Roman Catholic ecclesiology', in Gerard Mannion & Lewis S Mudge (eds.), *The Routledge companion to the Christian church*, Routledge, New York, pp. 234-50.

Leonard, Richard 1995, *Beloved daughters: 100 years of papal teaching on women*, David Lovell Publishing, Ringwood.

Lewins, Frank 1977, ‘Continuity and change in a religious organization: some aspects of the Australian Catholic Church’, *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, vol. 16, no. 4, pp. 371-82.

Lewis, Constance 2010, ‘Mary McKillop and the founding of the Josephites’, *Champagnat: A Journal of Marist Education*, vol. 12, no. 1, pp. 28-67.

LGBTIQ+ Health Australia 2019, *‘LGBTI’ people and communities*, 28 June, viewed 11 October 2021, <https://www.lgbtiqhealth.org.au/lgbti_people_and_communities>.

Lledo Gomez, Cristina 2015, ‘From infants to mothers: recovering the call to the people of God to become Mother Church in Lumen Gentium’, *Ecclesiology*, vol. 11, no. 1, pp. 34-64.

Lledo Gomez, Cristina 2018, *The church as woman and mother: historical and theological foundations*, Paulist Press, New York.

Lorde, Audre 2007, *Sister outsider*, Penguin Modern Classics, London.

Luckman, Harriet A 2006, ‘Vatican II and the role of women’, in William Madges (ed.), *Vatican II: forty years later*, Orbis Books, Maryknoll, pp. 78-99.

Lynch, Richard A 2014, ‘Foucault’s theory of power’, in Dianna Taylor (ed.), *Michel Foucault: key concepts*, Routledge, New York, pp. 13-26.

Mackay, Hugh 1998, *Three generations: the changing values and political outlook of Australians*, Parliament of Australia, Canberra, viewed 15 May 2020, <https://www.aph.gov.au/senate/~/~/link.aspx?_id=55EBCBDD06BE48DD83503B1956A7366B&_z=z>.

Macdonald, Marie, Carpenter, Peter, Cornish, Sandie, Costigan, Michael, Dixon, Robert, Malone, Margaret, Manning, Kevin & Wagner, Sonia 1999, *Woman and man: one in Christ Jesus*, Harper Collins, Sydney.

Maddox, Marion 2013, ‘“Rise up warrior princess daughters”: is evangelical women’s submission a mere fairy tale?’, *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, vol. 29, no. 1, pp. 9-26.

Madigan, Patricia 2018, ‘Women during and after Vatican II’, in Vladimir Latinovic, Gerard Mannion & Jason Welle (eds.), *Catholicism opening to the world and other confessions: Vatican II and its impact*, Palgrave Macmillan, Switzerland.

Madigan, Patricia 2021, ‘“Be patient, ladies! Be patient!”: women and the Australian church (WATAC), 1982-2021’, *The Australasian Catholic Record*, vol. 98, no. 3, pp. 259-83.

Mahmood, Saba 2012, *Politics of piety: the Islamic revival and the feminist subject*, Princeton University Press, Princeton.

Maitand, Sara 2015, ‘What on earth can complementarity actually be?’, in The Catholic Women Speak Network (ed.), *Catholic women speak: bringing our gifts to the table*, Paulist Press, Mahwah, pp. 67-9.

Maley, Jacqueline 2010, ‘MacKillop exposed paedophile priest’, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 September, viewed 26 May 2020, <https://www.smh.com.au/national/mackillop-exposed-paedophile-priest-20100924-15qkt.html>.

Malone, Mary T 2019, *The elephant in the Church*, Columba Books, Dublin.

Manne, Kate 2018, *Down girl: the logic of misogyny*, Oxford University Press, New York.

Marcel, Mary, 2007, ‘Incommensurable data, procrustean paradigms: Why news of sexual abuse of nuns by priests never made your hometown newspaper,’ *Proceedings of the Alta Biennial Conference on Argumentation*, pp. 506–514.

Marquis, Angela 2021, ‘She who was: Scriptural linguistics and the absent image of God’, *Pastoral Liturgy*, vol. 51, no. 3, pp. 1-9, viewed 2 July 2021, <https://researchonline.nd.edu.au/pastoral-liturgy/vol51/iss3/4>.

Marr, David 2020a, ‘The hidden findings on George Pell are now clear: he could have protected children from abuse. He didn't,’ *The Guardian*, 7 May, viewed 19 May 2020, < https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2020/may/07/the-hidden-findings-on-george-pell-are-now-clear-he-could-have-protected-children-from-abuse-he-didnt>.

Marr, David 2020b, ‘This is a mighty triumph for George Pell. Now prepare for a storm of rage from the cardinal's supporters’, *The Guardian*, 7 April, viewed 19 May 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2020/apr/07/george-pells-supporters-will-rage-but-will-rome-join-in-david-marr>.

Mason, Michael 2010, ‘World Youth Day 2008: What did we gain?, What did we learn?’, *The Australasian Catholic Record*, vol. 87, no. 3, pp. 334-48.

McAlinden, Anne-Marie 2012, *‘Grooming’ and the sexual abuse of children: institutional, internet, and familial dimensions*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

McAleese, Mary 2018, ‘Text: International Women's Day address by Mary McAleese’, *Independent Catholic News*, viewed 29 October 2021, <https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/34479>.

McBrien, Richard P 2009, *The Church: the evolution of Catholicism*, HarperCollins, New York.

McClay, B D 2018, ‘Problems like Maria: a saint for (another) sexual-abuse crisis’, *Commonweal*, 31 July, viewed 17 August 2021, <https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/problems-maria>.

McClintock Fulkerson, Mary 1994, *Changing the subject: women’s discourses and feminist theology*, Fortress Press, Minneapolis.

McEnroy, Carmel 1996, *Guests in their own house: the women of Vatican II*, Crossroad Publishing Company, New York.

McEwan, Tracy 2018, ‘Changing patterns of religious practice and belief among church-attending Catholic women in Australia’, *Journal for the Academic Study of Religion*, vol. 31, no. 3, pp. 186-215.

McEwan, Tracy & Gemmell, Patricia 2021, ‘Raising women’s voices’, Eureka Street, 6 October, viewed 29 October 2021, <https://www.eurekastreet.com.au/article/raising-women-s-voices>.

McEwan, Tracy & Kathleen McPhillips 2017, ‘Re-framing religious identity and belief: Gen X women and the Catholic Church’, *Journal for the Academic Study of Religion*, vol. 30, no. 3, pp. 205-26.

McEwan, Tracy, Sterland, Sam & McPhillips, Kathleen 2020, 'Participation and engagement in Catholic parish life in Australia: examining the impact and importance of cultural and linguistic factors', in Ralph W Hood & Sariya Cheruvallil-Contractor (eds.), *Research in the social scientific study of religion*, Brill, Leiden, pp. 162-88, doi:10.1163/9789004443969

McGuire, Meredith B 2002, *Religion: the social context*, 5th edn, Waveland Press, Long Grove.

McGuire, Meredith B 2008, *Lived religion: faith and practice in everyday life*, Oxford University Press, New York.

McGuire, Meredith B 2016, 'Individual sensory experiences, socialized senses, and everyday lived religion in practice', *Social Compass*, vol. 63, no. 2, pp. 152–162. doi:10.1177/0037768616628789

McKinley, Diana & Webber, Ruth 2012, 'Important aspects of Catholic identity for committed generations X and Y Catholics', *Australasian Catholic Record*, vol. 89, no. 3, pp. 322-32.

McPhillips, Kathleen 1994, *Feminism, religion and modernity*, unpublished PhD thesis, University of Newcastle, Newcastle.

McPhillips, Kathleen 2003, 'Post-modern Sainthood: "Hearing the voice of the saint" and the uses of feminist hagiography', *SeaChanges*, vol. 3, viewed 19 July 2021, <https://e1bb9ec1-6867-40c1-b995-f2d8b6524b48.filesusr.com/ugd/cd26e8_08622ff1889e45d5ae1dfc4a7ac315c6.pdf>.

McPhillips, Kathleen 2006, 'Believing in post-modernity: technologies of enchantment in contemporary Marian devotion', in Lynne Hume & Kathleen McPhillips (eds.), *Popular spiritualities: the politics of contemporary enchantment*, Ashgate Publishing, Aldershot, pp. 147-58.

McPhillips, Kathleen 2013, 'In the southern land: gender, nation, and saint-making in Australia', *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion (Indiana University Press)*, vol. 29, no. 1, pp. 26-39.

McPhillips, Kathleen 2015, ‘Religion and gender in the post-secular state: accommodation or discrimination?’. *Feminist Theology*, vol. 23, no. 2, pp. 156-70, doi:10.1177/0966735014555635

McPhillips, Kathleen 2016, ‘Contested feminisms: women’s religious leadership and the politics of contemporary western feminism’, J*ournal for the Academic Study of Religion*, vol. 29, no. 2, pp. 134-49.

McPhillips, Kathleen 2017a, ‘Breathing underwater – swimming in the sea of collective trauma’, *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, vol. 27, no. 2, pp. 172-81.

McPhillips, Kathleen 2017b, ‘Royal Commission hearings show Catholic Church faces a massive reform task’, *The Conversation*, 13 February, viewed 20 April 2017, <https://theconversation.com/royal-commission-hearings-show-catholic-church-faces-a-massive-reform-task-72809>.

McPhillips, Kathleen 2017c, ‘“Unbearable knowledge”: managing cultural trauma at the Royal Commission’, *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, vol. 27, no. 2, pp. 130-46.

McPhillips, Kathleen 2018, ‘“Soul murder”: investigating spiritual trauma at the Royal Commission’, *Journal of Australian Studies*, vol. 42, no. 2, pp. 231-42.

McPhillips, Kathleen 2019, ‘The Catholic Church is headed for another sex abuse scandal as #NunsToo speak up’, *The Conversation*, 15 February, viewed 20 June 2021, < https://theconversation.com/the-catholic-church-is-headed-for-another-sex-abuse-scandal-as-nunstoo-speak-up-111539>.

McPhillips, Kathleen 2020, ‘Religion after the Royal Commission: challenges to religion–state relations’, *Religions*, vol. 11, no. 1, p. 44.

McPhillips, Kathleen & McEwan, Tracy 2020, ‘Denied full participation, Catholic women mobilise for change’, *The Conversation*, 6 March, viewed 20 April 2020, <https://theconversation.com/denied-full-participation-catholic-women-mobilise-for-change-131557>.

Menichetti, Massimiliano 2019, ‘Pope authorizes pilgrimages to Medjugorje’, *Vatican News*, 12 May, viewed 20 June 2021, <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2019-05/pope-authorizes-pilgrimages-to-medjugorje.html>.

Miller, Donald E. & Miller, Arpi Misha 2000, ‘Understanding generation X: values, politics and religious commitments’, in Richard W Flory & Donald E Miller (eds.), *Gen X religion*, Routledge, London, pp. 1-14.

Millar, Royce, Schneiders, Ben, & Vedelago, Chris 2018, ‘Catholic Church's massive wealth revealed’, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 February 2018, viewed 7 October 2021, < https://www.smh.com.au/national/catholic-church-s-massive-wealth-revealed-20180209-p4yzus.html#:~:text=The%20Catholic%20Church%20is%20among,%2C%20by%20value%2C%20in%20NSW.&text=The%20Catholic%20Church%20owns%20property,than%20%2430%20billion%20Australia%2Dwide>.

Monagle, Clare 2020, *Scholastic affect: gender, maternity and the history of emotions (elements in histories of emotions and the senses)*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Mong, Ambrose 2019, *Power of popular piety: a critical examination*, Cascade Books, Eugene.

Monro, Anita 2021, ‘A kaleidoscopic vessel sailing a *kyriarchal* ocean: the third wave feminist theologies of Women-Church’, in Jione Havea (ed.), *Theological and hermeneutical explorations from Australia: horizons of contextuality*, Lexington Books/ Fortress Academic, Lanham.

Moore, Bernice 2007, ‘WATAC herstory 1982-2007’, *Women-Church: An Australian Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, no. 40, pp. 96-101.

Morgans, Jenny 2018, ‘Reflexivity, identity and the role of the researcher’, in Nicola Slee, Fran Porter & Anne Phillips (eds.), *Researching female faith: qualitative research methods*, Routledge, London, pp. 189-202.

Munro, Eileen & Fish, Sheila 2015, *Hear no evil, see no evil: understanding failure to identify and report child sexual abuse in institutional contexts*, Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, Sydney, viewed 20 January 2021, <https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/file-list/Research%20Report%20-%20Hear%20no%20evil%2C%20see%20no%20evil%20Understanding%20fail

ure%20to%20identify%20and%20report%20child%20sexual%20abuse%20in%20institutional%20contexts%20-%20Identification.pdf>.

National Centre for Evangelisation (NCE) 2021, *Catholic women consultation*, Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, Canberra, viewed 19 July 2021, <https://nce.catholic.org.au/catholicwomen/events/catholicwomen>.

National Centre for Pastoral Research (NCPR) 2019, *Social profile of the Catholic community in Australia based on the 2016 Australian census*, Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, Canberra, viewed 13 December 2019, <https://ncpr.catholic.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Social-Profile-of-the-Catholic-Community-in-Australia-2016-v2.pdf>.

National Centre for Pastoral Research (NCPR) 2021, 'Vatican statistics 2019: Sacraments in Australia', *NCPR Pastoral Research Online*, Issue 54, viewed 27 October 2021, < https://ncpr.catholic.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Pastoral%20Research%20Online-Edition54-Oct21-ReS.pdf#page=3>.

Noseda, Mary 2008, 'Belonging to the Catholic Church in contemporary Australia: the case of immigrants', *The Australasian Catholic Record*, vol. 85, no. 4, pp. 415-28.

NSW Government 2012–14, *Special Commission of Inquiry into matters relating to the police investigation of certain child sexual abuse allegations in the Catholic Diocese of Maitland–Newcastle*, viewed 28 June 2021, < https://www.dpc.nsw.gov.au/publications/special-commissions-of-inquiry/special-commission-of-inquiry-into-matters-relating-to-the-police-investigation-of-certain-child-sexual-abuse-allegations-in-the-catholic-diocese-of-maitlandnewcastle/>.

Oakley, Lisa 2018, 'Understanding spiritual abuse', *Church Times*, 16 February 2018, viewed 14 May 2021, <https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2018/16-february/comment/opinion/understanding-spiritual-abuse>.

Oakley, Lisa, Kinmond, Kathryn & Humphreys, Justin 2018, 'Spiritual abuse in Christian faith settings: definition, policy and practice guidance', *The Journal of Adult Protection*, vol. 20, no. 3/4, pp. 144-54, doi:10.1108/JAP-03-2018-0005

O’Connell, Mary 2008/9, ‘Our lady of Coogee: Marian visions in Irish Australia’, *Australasian Journal of Irish Studies*, vol. 8, pp. 67-88.

O’Donnell, Karen 2020, ‘The voices of the Marys: towards a method in feminist trauma theologies’, in Karen O'Donnell &Katie Cross (eds.), *Feminist trauma theologies: body, scripture & church in critical perspective*, Kindle Ed., SCM Press, Norwich.

Ogden, Steven G 2018, *The church, authority, and Foucault: imagining the church as an open space of freedom*, Routledge, New York.

O’Leary, Patrick, Koh, Emma & Dare, Andrew 2017, *Grooming and child sexual abuse in institutional contexts*, Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, Sydney.

O’Leary, Zina 2010, *The essential guide to doing your research project*, Sage, London.

O’Malley, John 2003, ‘The style of Vatican II’, *America*, vol. 188, no. 6, p. 12.

O’Malley, John 2010, *What happened at Vatican II*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge.

Ormerod, Neil 2014, *Re-visioning the church: an experiment in systematic-historical ecclesiology*, Augsburg Fortress Press, Minneapolis.

Pargament, Kenneth, Murray-Swank, Nichole & Mahoney, Annette 2008, ‘Problem and solution: the spiritual dimension of clergy sexual abuse and its impact on survivors’, *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, vol. 17, no. 3-4, pp. 397-420.

Parliament of Victoria 2012–13, *Inquiry into the handling of child abuse by religious and other organisations*, viewed 28 June 2021, <https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/340-fcdc/inquiry-into-the-handling-of-child-abuse-by-religious-and-other-organisations>.

Paul VI 1963, *Allocution of the Holy Father Paul VI at the beginning of the second Vatican ecumenical council*, 29 September, viewed 1 April 2020, <http://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/it/speeches/1963/documents/hf_p-vi_spe_19630929_concilio-vaticano-ii.html>.

Paul VI 1965, *Closing of the second Vatican ecumenical council: address of Pope Paul VI to women*, 8 December, viewed 20 July 2021,

<https://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/speeches/1965/documents/hf_p-vi_spe_19651208_epilogo-concilio-donne.html>.

Pepper, Miriam & Powell, Ruth 2021, *NAFVP Prevalence study report: the prevalence of intimate partner violence among Australians who identify as Anglican*, NCLS Research Report for the Anglican Church of Australia, NCLS Research.

Pepper, Miriam, Powell, Ruth & McEwan, Tracy 2021, *NAFVP experience study report: the nature of experiences of family violence for those with a connection with Anglican churches*, NCLS Research Report for the Anglican Church of Australia, NCLS Research.

Pepper, Miriam, Powell, Ruth, Sterland, Sam & Hancock, Nicole 2018, 'Twenty-five years of data on Australian churches: strengths and limitations', in Andrew Village & Ralph W Hood (eds.), *Research in the social scientific study of religion*, vol. 29, Brill, Leiden, pp. 189-203.

Perales, Francisco, Bouma, Gary D & Campbell, Alice 2019, 'Religion, support of equal rights for same-sex couples and the Australian national vote on marriage equality', *Sociology of Religion*, vol. 80, no. 1, pp. 107-29.

Perkins, Pheme 1990, 'The Gospel according to John', in Raymond Edward Brown, Joseph A Fitzmyer & Roland E Murphy (eds), *The new Jerome biblical commentary*, Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River, pp. 943-85.

Pirola, Ron & Pirola, Mavis 1998, 'The Australian Antioch movement today: strengths, concerns and challenges', *The Australasian Catholic Record*, vol. 75, no. 4, pp. 424-29.

Pirola, Teresa 1998, 'The development of the Antioch youth movement in Australia', *The Australasian Catholic Record*, vol. 75, no. 4, pp. 417-23.

Plante, Thomas G 2020, 'Clericalism contributes to religious, spiritual, and behavioral struggles among Catholic priests', *Religions*, vol. 11, pp. 217-25, doi:10.3390/rel11050217

Pope, Barbara Corrado 1985, 'Immaculate and powerful: the Marian revival in the nineteenth century', in Clarissa W Atkinson, Constance H Buchanan & Margaret Ruth Miles (eds.), *Immaculate and powerful: the female in sacred image and social reality*, Beacon Press, Boston, pp. 173-200.

Porter, Nicole 2018, '"Sometimes you need a question": structure and flexibility in feminist interviewing', in Nicola Slee, Fran Porter & Anne Phillips (eds.), *Researching female faith: qualitative research methods*, Routledge, London, pp. 83-98.

Possamai, Adam 2009, *Sociology of religion for generations X and Y*, Acumen, Durham.

Powell, Ruth, Pepper, Miriam, Hancock, Nicole, Sterland, Sam & Dixon, Robert 2016, *2016 NCLS Attender Sample Survey AC* [computer file], NCLS Research, Sydney.

Pritsch, Sylvia 2004, 'Inventing images, constructing standpoints: feminist strategies of the technologies of the self', in Dianna Taylor & Karen Vintges (eds.), *Feminism and the final Foucault*, University of Illinois Press, Urbana, pp. 118-142.

Prowse, Christopher & Long Van Nguyen, Vincent 2019, 'Foreword', in Sandie Cornish & Andrea Dean (eds.), *Still listening to the Spirit: woman and man twenty years on*, Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (ACBC), Canberra, pp. xix-xx.

Radford Ruether, Rosemary 1981, *To change the world: Christology and cultural criticism*, Crossroad, New York.

Radford Ruether, Rosemary 1983, *Sexism and God-talk: toward a feminist theology*, SCM Press, Suffolk.

Radford Ruether, Rosemary 1985, *Women-church: theology and practice of feminist liturgical communities*, Harper & Row, San Francisco.

Radford Ruether, Rosemary 1987, *Contemporary Roman Catholicism crises and challenges*, Sheed & Ward, Kansas City.

Radford Ruether, Rosemary 1988, 'Christian quest for redemptive community', *Cross Currents*, vol. 38, no. 1, pp. 3-16.

Radford Ruether, Rosemary 1991, 'Redemptive community in Christianity', *Buddhist-Christian Studies*, vol. 11, pp. 217-30.

Radford Ruether, Rosemary 2005, 'The Church as liberation community from patriarchy: the praxis of ministry as discipleship of equals', Keynote address, *Women's Ordination Worldwide (WOW) Conference 23 July 2005*, viewed 1 December 2017, <http://womensordinationcampaign.org/ottawa-2005/2014/2/2/rosemary-radford-ruether>.

Ramazanoglu, Caroline 1993, 'Introduction', in Caroline Ramazanoglu (ed.), *Up against Foucault: explorations of some tensions between Foucault and feminism*, Routledge, New York, pp. 1-27.

Ratinen, Teemu 2019, 'The normalizing power of the therapeutic God: subjectivity, religious agency, and shame before God', *Religion and Gender*, vol. 9, pp. 50-69.

Ratzinger, Joseph 1980, 'The sign of the woman: an introductory essay on the encyclical *Redemptoris Mater*', in *Mary: the church at the source*, Ignatius Press, San Francisco, pp. 37-60.

Ratzinger, Joseph 1988, 'On the position of Mariology and Marian spirituality within the totality of faith and theology', in Hans Moll (ed.), *The Church and women: a compendium*, Ignatius Press, San Francisco.

Roberts, Ellouise 2013, *Women in the Australian workforce: a 2013 update*, viewed 1 April 2017, <http:// www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments /Parliamentary_Library/FlagPost/2013/March/Women_in_the_Au stralian_workforce_A_2013_update>.

Robinson, Penelope 2007/8, 'Feminism and the generational divide: an exploration of some of the debates', *Journal of Interdisciplinary Gender Studies*, vol. 10, no. 2, pp. 46-55.

Rose, Gerald, Hughes, Philip & Bouma, Gary D 2014, *Re-imagining Church: positive ministry responses to the age of experience*, Christian Research Association, Nunawading.

Ross, Susan A. 2001, *Extravagant affections: a feminist sacramental theology*, Continuum, New York.

Ross, Susan A. 2012, *Anthropology: Engaging theology – Catholic perspectives*, Liturgical Press, Collegeville.

Ross, Susan A 2013, 'Joys and hopes, griefs and anxieties: Catholic women since Vatican II', *New Theology Review*, vol. 25, no. 2, pp. 30-8.

Rottenberg, Catherine 2014, 'The rise of neoliberal feminism', *Cultural Studies*, vol. 28, no. 3, pp. 418-37.

Rottenberg, Catherine 2019, '#MeToo and the prospects of political change', *Soundings*, no. 71, pp. 40-9.

Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (RCIRCSA) 2017a, *Final report: Preface and executive summary*, Commonwealth of Australia, viewed 28 June 2021, <https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/final_report_-_preface_and_executive_summary.pdf>.

Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (RCIRCSA) 2017b, *Final report: Volume 16, Religious institutions Book 2*, Commonwealth of Australia, viewed 28 June 2021, <https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/file-list/un-redacted_final_report_volume_16_book_2_-_religious_institutions.pdf>.

Ruddick, Sara 1989, *Maternal thinking: toward a politics of peace*, Ballantine Books, New York.

Rush, Ormond 2003, 'The offices of Christ, Lumen Gentium and the people's sense of the faith', *Pacifica*, vol. 16, no. 2, pp. 137-52.

Ryan, Christopher 2020, 'A brief history of Australian Catholic youth ministry – part II', *The Australasian Catholic Record*, vol. 81, no. 1, pp. 30-44.

Rymarz, Richard 2004, 'Lost generation: the cultures of Gen X Catholics', *The Australasian Catholic Record*, vol. 97, no. 2, pp. 144-52.

Rymarz, Richard 2007a, 'Generation X Catholics as adult learners: some considerations for theological education', *Journal of Adult Theological Education*, vol. 4, no. 1, pp. 93-102.

Rymarz, Richard 2007b, ‘The impact of World Youth Day: a twelve month follow-up of under 18 Australian WYD 2005 participants’, *The Australasian Catholic Record*, vol. 84, no. 4, pp. 387-400.

Sakenfeld, Katharine Doob 2003, *Just wives? Stories of power and survival in the Old Testament and today*, Westminster John Knox Press, Louisville.

Santos, Patricia H 2017, ‘That all may enjoy abundant life: a theological vision of flourishing from the margins’, *Feminist Theology*, vol. 25, no. 3, pp. 228-39.

Schillebeeckx, Edward 1990, *Church: the human story of God*, trans. John Stephen Bowden, SCM Press, London.

Scholl, Kate 1988, ‘What is Women-Church?’, *Women-Church: an Australian journal of feminist studies in religion*, no. 2, p. 5.

Schüssler Fiorenza, Elisabeth 1990, *Discipleship of equals: a critical feminist ekklēsia-logy of liberation*, SCM Press, London.

Schüssler Fiorenza, Elisabeth 1992, ‘Feminist spirituality, Christian identity, and Catholic vision’, in Carol P Christ & Judith Plaskow (eds.), *Womanspirit rising: a feminist reader in religion*, HarperCollins, San Francisco, pp. 136-48.

Schüssler Fiorenza, Elisabeth 1993, *But she said: feminist practices of biblical interpretation*, Beacon Press, Boston.

Schüssler Fiorenza, Elisabeth 1996, ‘For women in men’s world: a critical feminist theology of liberation’, in Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (ed.), *The power of naming: a Concilium reader in feminist liberation theology*, Orbis Books, Maryknoll.

Schüssler Fiorenza, Elisabeth 1999, ‘The emperor has no clothes: democratic ekklesial self-understanding and kyriocratic Roman authority’, *Concilium*, vol. 3, pp. 58-65.

Schüssler Fiorenza, Elisabeth 2002, ‘Public discourse, religion, and wo/men’s struggles for justice’, *DePaul Law Review*, vol. 51, no. 4, pp. 1077-101, viewed 1 April 2018, <http://via.library.depaul.edu/law-review/vol51/iss4/6>.

Schüssler Fiorenza, Elisabeth 2005, ‘Keynote address: We are church – a kingdom of priests’, *Women’s Ordination Worldwide (WOW) second international*

conference: breaking silence, breaking bread: Christ calls women to lead, Ottawa, viewed 26 June 2021, < http://womensordinationcampaign.org/ottawa-2005/2014/2/2/elizabeth-schussler-fiorenza-we-are-a-church-a-kingdom-of-priests>.

Schüssler Fiorenza, Elisabeth 2009, *In memory of her: a feminist theological reconstruction of Christian origins*, 10th anniversary ed., Crossroad, New York.

Schüssler Fiorenza, Elisabeth 2016, *Congress of wo/men: religion, gender, and kyriarchal power*, Feminist Studies in Religion Books, Cambridge.

Sheehan, Mary Ellen 2000, 'Vatican II and the ecclesial ministry of women: ongoing challenges in the Roman Catholic Church', *Toronto Journal of Theology*, vol. 16, no. 1, pp. 51-61.

Shooter, Susan 2018, 'Choosing the right key: Glaserian grounded theory, NVivo and analysing interviews with survivors', in Nicola Slee, Fran Porter & Anne Phillips (eds.), *Researching female faith: qualitative research methods*, Routledge, London, pp. 125-37.

Sisterhood National Catholic Women's Movement 2020, *Sisterhood national Catholic women's conference 2020: anointed*, viewed 7 July 2020, <https://www.trybooking.com/book/event?eid=556337&fbclid=IwAR1r3KQlZymt6pqRCvyCTFNp5d7hw_Kc7d7h_kytFgp0mUV10JNosgrFDAs>.

Spadaro, Anthony 2013, 'A big heart open to God: an interview with Pope Francis', *America: the Jesuit review*, 30 September, viewed 2 July 2021, <https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2013/09/30/big-heart-open-god-interview-pope-francis>.

Strack, Christoph 2020, 'Germany's Catholic Church: women are pushing for equality', *Deutsche Welle*, viewed 30 October 2021, <https://www.dw.com/en/germanys-catholic-church-women-are-pushing-for-equality/a-55310964>.

Stringer, Martin D. 2013, 'The sounds of silence: searching for the religious in everyday discourse', in Abby Day, Giselle Vincett & Christopher R. Cotter (eds.), *Social identities between the sacred and the secular*, Taylor & Francis Group, Burlington, pp. 161-72.

Sullivan, Francis 2021, ‘Light from the southern cross – 10 October 2021’, *Blog by Francis Sullivan*, Catholic Social Services Australia, viewed 11 October 2021, <https://cssa.org.au/plenary-council/>.

Summers, Anne 1993, ‘The future of feminism: a letter to the next generation’, *Refractory girl: a women’s studies journal*, vol. 44–45, pp. 192-7.

Taylor, Dianna 2009, ‘Normativity and normalization’, *Foucault Studies*, no 7, pp. 45-63.

Taylor, Dianna 2010, ‘Monstrous women’, *PhaenEx*, vol. 5, no. 2, pp. 125-51.

Taylor, Dianna 2013, ‘Resisting the subject: a feminist-Foucauldian approach to countering sexual violence’, *Foucault Studies*, no. 16, pp. 88-103.

Taylor, Dianna 2018, ‘Humiliation as a harm of sexual violence: feminist versus neoliberal perspectives’, *Hypatia*, vol. 33, no. 3, pp. 434-50.

Thatcher, Adrian 2020, *Gender and Christian ethics*, Cambridge University Press, New York.

Thompson, Kevin 2003, ‘Forms of resistance: Foucault on tactical reversal and self-formation’, *Continental Philosophy Review*, vol. 36, pp. 113-38.

Trible, Phyllis 1995, ‘Exegesis for storytellers and other strangers’, *Journal of Biblical Literature*, vol. 114, no. 1, pp. 3-19.

Tuttle, Tara 2020, ‘#Nunstoo’, in Debra Meyers and Mary Sue Barnett (eds.), *Crisis and challenge in the Roman Catholic Church: perspectives on decline and reformation*, Lexington Books, Lanham.

United Nations (UN) 1993, *Declaration on the elimination of violence against women*, UN, New York, viewed 19 July 2021, <https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/48/104>.

UN Women 2021, *Facts and figures: ending violence against women*, March, viewed 18 October 2021, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/facts-and-figures>.

Vasko, Elizabeth T 2014, ‘The difference gender makes: nuptiality, analogy, and the limits of appropriating Hans Urs von Balthasar’s theology in the context of sexual violence’, *Journal of Religion*, vol. 94, no. 4, pp. 504-28.

Vatican News 2019, *Pope Francis: woman is the image of the Church that is Mother*, 22 February, viewed 30 June 2021, <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2019-02/protection-minors-pope-francis-woman-image-church-mother-vatiab.html>.

Vatican News 2021, *Deadline extended for first phase of the synodal process*, 30 October, viewed 1 November 2021, <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/vatican-city/news/2021-10/synod-extension-first-phase-general-secretariat.html>.

Vintges, Karen 2012, 'Muslim women in the western media: Foucault, agency, governmentality and ethics', *European Journal of Women's Studies*, vol. 19, no. 3, pp. 283-98.

Voas, David 2009, 'The rise and fall of fuzzy fidelity in Europe', *European Sociological Review*, vol. 25, no. 2, pp. 155-68.

Voices of Faith 2019, *About*, viewed 29 October 2021, <https://voicesoffaith.org/about/>.

Vorgrimler, Herbert 1985, 'From sensus fidei to consensus fidelium', in Edward Schillebeeckx & Johann Baptist Metz (eds.), *Concilium: the teaching authority of believers*, T&T Clark, Edinburgh, vol. 180.

Wagner, Sonia 2010, *Man and woman: one in Jesus Christ – a retrospective*, Catholic Social Justice Series 67, pp. 7-15.

Warhurst, John 2008, 'The Catholic lobby: structures, policy styles and religious networks', *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, vol. 67, no. 2, pp. 213-30.

Warhurst, John 2021, *Plenary insight: a daily blog*, Concerned Catholics Canberra Goulburn, viewed 11 October 2021, <https://concernedcatholicscanberra.org/new-page-62>.

Warner, Marina 2016, *Alone of all her sex: the myth and the cult of the Virgin Mary*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

WATAC 2021, *WATAC: Women and the Australian Church*, viewed 30 October 2021, <https://watac.net.au/>.

WATER 2021, *Feminist Liberation Theologians' Network*, viewed 3 November 2021, <https://www.waterwomensalliance.org/feminist-liberation-theologians-network/>.

Watson, Natalie 1996, *Introducing feminist ecclesiology*, Sheffield Academic Press, New York.

Watson, Natalie 2008, 'Feminist ecclesiology', in Gerard Mannion & Lewis S Mudge (eds.), *The Routledge companion to the Christian church*, Routledge, New York., pp. 461-75.

Welch, Sharon D 1985, *Communities of resistance and solidarity: a feminist theology of liberation*, Orbis Books, Maryknoll.

White, Erin 2007, 'Women-Church: a personal account', *Women-Church: an Australian journal of feminist studies in religion*, no. 40, pp. 125-8.

Wilson O'Reilly, Mollie 2018, 'Her, too: Stop making victims of sexual assault into martyrs for virginity', *Commonweal*, 17 September, <https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/her-too>.

Winfield, Nicole 2020, 'What's in a name? At the Vatican, a debate on inclusiveness', *AP News*, 17 September 2020, viewed 14 May 2021, <https://apnews.com/article/archive-pope-francis-06aeb7ab51458529a5572ff718fddda2>.

Wink, Walter 1998, *The powers that be: theology for a new millennium*, Doubleday, New York.

Winter, Miriam Therese, Lummis, Adair & Stokes, Allison 1995, *Defecting in place: women taking responsibility for their own spiritual lives*, Crossroad Publishing Company, New York.

Wuthnow, Robert 2007, *After the baby boomers: how twenty and thirty-somethings are shaping the future of American religion*, Princeton University Press, Princeton.

Appendix A: Project research flyer

Dr Kathleen McPhillips
School of Humanities and Social Science
University of Newcastle
Callaghan NSW 2308
Tel 0249215920
Fax 0249216933
Kathleen.Mcphillips@newcastle.edu.au

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE AUSTRALIA

RESEARCH STUDY

www.newcastle.edu.au

GEN X WOMEN AND THE AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

Negotiating Religious Identity and Participation

Participants are sought for the research project identified above which is being conducted by Tracy McEwan from the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Newcastle, NSW.

This research project will explore the stories and experiences of Gen X women in Australia who currently or have previously identified as Catholic. It seeks to establish the reasons for their level of participation in parish and community life, and discover the factors contributing to the disengagement and disaffiliation of some Gen X Catholic women who have distanced themselves from the teaching and practices of the Catholic Church. It will investigate new forms of engagement that might assist the Catholic Church to partake in respectful dialogue with Gen X women regarding their participation.

Who can participate in the research?

Women born between 1965 and 1980 who currently or previously identified as Catholic, and live in the geographic Catholic dioceses of Sydney, Perth, Maitland-Newcastle, Melbourne and Cairns, are invited to participate. Participants are being sought across three demographic groups:

Engaged Catholic Women: Self-identifying Catholics who indicate that their Catholic faith and practices are an important part of their lives

Disengaged Catholic Women: Self-identifying Catholics who are loosely affiliated with the Catholic tradition

Disaffiliated Catholic Women: Previously self-identifying Catholics and who have now ceased to identify as Catholic

Forty-five women, selected on a first come basis, across demographics and location are able to participate; not all women who express interest will be able to participate in this research.

What would you be asked to do?

If you are able to participate, you will be invited to attend an interview conducted by the researcher Tracy McEwan. The interview will involve responding to topic questions relating to your experience and participation in the Catholic Church. The interview will be digitally recorded then transcribed. The interviews will be held at a place and time convenient to the interviewee either in person or via Skype.

How much time will it take?

It is anticipated that the interview will take between one and two hours of your time depending on your responses.

What do you need to do to participate?

If you are interested in participating, please make contact with Tracy McEwan via email or telephone. At this stage, if there are still places available Tracy will send you a project Information Statement with attachments and a Consent Form which you will need to read and understand before you consent to participate. Phone: 0425 269491; Email: tracy.mcewan@uon.edu.au

This project has been approved by the University's Human Research Ethics Committee, Approval No.H-2017-0205 .

Document Version 1.5; dated 27-Feb-18

Appendix B: Participant information statement

Dr Kathleen McPhillips
School of Humanities and Social Science
University of Newcastle
Callaghan NSW 2308
Tel 0249215920
Fax 0249216933
Kathleen.Mcphillips@newcastle.edu.au

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE AUSTRALIA

Information Statement for the Research Project

Gen X Women and the Australia Catholic Church: Negotiating Religious Identity and Participation

Document Version 1.5; dated 27-Feb-18

You are receiving this information statement as you have expressed an interest in participating in in the research project identified above which is being conducted by Tracy McEwan from the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Newcastle, NSW.

The research is part of Tracy McEwan's PhD studies at the University of Newcastle, supervised by Dr Kathleen McPhillips and Emeritus Professor Terry Lovat from the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Newcastle, NSW.

Why is the research being done?

The purpose of this research is to explore the stories and experiences of Gen X women in Australia who currently or have previously identified as Catholic. It will seek to establish the reasons for their level of participation in parish and community life, and discover the factors contributing to the disengagement and disaffiliation of some Gen X Catholic women who have distanced themselves from the teaching and practices of the Catholic Church. It will investigate new forms of engagement that might assist the Catholic Church to partake in respectful dialogue with Gen X women regarding their participation.

Who can participate in the research?

Women born between 1965 and 1980 who *currently or previously* identified as Catholic, and live in the geographic Catholic dioceses of Sydney, Perth, Maitland-Newcastle, Melbourne or Cairns are invited to participate. Participants are being sought across three demographic groups:

Engaged Catholic Women:

Self-identifying Catholics who indicate that their Catholic faith and practices are an important part of their lives

Disengaged Catholic Women:

Self-identifying Catholics who are loosely affiliated with the Catholic tradition

Disaffiliated Catholic Women:

Previously self-identifying Catholics and who have now ceased to identify as Catholic

Forty-five women, split across each demographic group and geographic location are able to participate. Fifteen participants will be chosen on a first come basis within each demographic across the five geographic locations; this means not all women who express interest will be able to participate in this research.

What would you be asked to do?

If you agree to participate you will be invited to answer some screening questions that will identify which demographic group you belong to. If the quota for your demographic group has not been reached you will be invited to attend a face-to-face interview either in person at a place of your convenience or via skype with the researcher Tracy McEwan. The interview will involve responding to questions relating to your experience and participation in the Catholic Church. For a list of sample questions please see the attachment to this Information Statement. The interview will be digitally recorded then transcribed.

What choice do you have?

Participation in this research is entirely your choice. Only those people who give their informed consent will be included in the project. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw from the project at any time (up to the point of publication) without giving a reason and have the option of withdrawing any data which identifies you.

People who elect not to participate or decide to withdraw from this research project need not give any reason for their decision. A person declining to participate in, or deciding to withdraw from, this research will not suffer any negative consequences or any disadvantage.

How much time will it take?

It is anticipated that the interview will take between one and two hours of your time depending on your responses

What are the risks and benefits of participating?

Broadly speaking, this research project will assist in the development of an understanding of why Gen X Catholic women are choosing different levels of participation and belief. This will contribute to an appreciation of the wider effects and consequences of the declining participation of women in the Catholic Church in Australia.

We cannot promise you any personal benefit from participating in this study, however some people may find it helpful talking about their participation and views.

Religious participation can be a sensitive issue and you should be aware recounting your experiences may cause you some concern. You will be asked about your participation in the Catholic Church starting from childhood until now. These questions are meant to establish your level of involvement and engagement in the life of the Catholic Church and you will not be asked to relate details of any past trauma. These questions are not intended to be intrusive or to make you feel uncomfortable, however, you should be aware that there is the possibility of experiencing emotional distress due to your participation in this research.

If you do decide to participate, you may stop the interview at any time and withdraw from the project without giving a reason. If you so choose, you can nominate a support person who, at your request, can be contacted should you experience distress during the interview. Should distress occur counselling services can be accessed at Lifeline on 131144 (24 hour telephone counselling service) and Lifeline Face to face counselling

service 02 4940 2000. The following websites also offer support and assistance: www.beyondblue.org.au; www.lifeline.org.au.

How will your privacy be protected?

Every effort will be made to ensure your confidentiality and that you will not be identifiable.

Any information collected by Tracy McEwan which might identify you will be stored securely and only accessed by Tracy McEwan, Dr McPhillips or Prof Lovat unless you consent otherwise, except as required by law. There are limits on assurances of confidentiality as research data/records may be subpoenaed by law.

The research data will be kept secure in the following ways:

- Names will be removed and changed into codes or non-identifying pseudonyms.
- Informed Consent forms will be stored separately from the data set and this information will be also be stored separately from the transcripts and recorded data.
- Recordings made of the interviews, along with transcripts of the interviews will be stored in password secured files on the University of Newcastle's ownCloud secure server.
- Access to the data will be permitted only to Ms McEwan, Dr McPhillips and Prof Lovat and the interview transcriber who will sign and be bound by a confidentiality agreement.
- Data will be retained for at least 5 years on the University of Newcastle's ownCloud secure server. Transcripts will then be destroyed and recorded data will be wiped from storage systems.

Information which might identify participants is not to be disclosed without their prior consent. Explicit consent is required in this case and participants must be able to sight the intended use of their material before granting a Release or Consent.

How will the information collected be used?

The data collected from your responses will be used for Tracy McEwan's PhD research project and articles that will be submitted for publication in relevant academic journals and books. Individual participants will not be identified in any part of published work arising from this study. If it is not possible to keep your identity confidential, you will be consulted before any articles are published, and your consent requested. If you decide that you do not want your identity revealed in any publications, then that research will be omitted from publication.

As your responses will be recorded and transcribed, you will be able to review the recording and/or transcript to edit or erase your contribution should you wish to do so. Should you wish to receive a summary of the study results please give your contact details when completing your consent form and these will be made available to you upon completion of the project (estimated completion date is 2020).

Non-identifiable data may be also be shared with other parties through publications and conference papers to encourage scientific scrutiny, and to contribute to further research and public knowledge, or as required by law.

The Australian Catholic Bishop's Conference (ACBC) Office for the Participation of Women has been notified of this research project. Permission has been given by the Bishop of each diocese in which this research is being carried out to conduct the research amongst appropriate congregants. If requested, the results of this study will be shared with the ACBC, the OPW and individual dioceses. Individual participants will not be identified in any results shared with the Catholic Church or its delegates.

What do you need to do to participate?

Please read this Information Statement and be sure you understand its contents before you consent to participate. If there is anything you do not understand, or you have questions, contact Tracy McEwan at Phone: 0425 269491, Email: tracy.mcewan@uon.edu.au.

If after you have reviewed this Information Statement you are still interested in participating, please make contact with Tracy McEwan via email or telephone. At this time, you will be screened for participation and if the quota for your demographic group has not been filled you will be able to arrange a time for your interview either in person at a place convenient to you or via Skype.

If after one week, you have not contacted Tracy McEwan she will make contact with you once to seek a response; please be aware that at this time you are free to decline to participate.

The attached Consent Form will need to be completed and returned to Tracy McEwan either in person, as an email attachment or via personal email just prior to the interview.

Further information

If you would like further information please contact either Tracy McEwan at Phone: 0425 269491, Email: tracy.mcewan@uon.edu.au or Dr Kathleen McPhilips at Phone: 02 4921 5920, Email: Kathleen.McPhillips@newcastle.edu.au.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this invitation.

Complaints about this research

This project has been approved by the University's Human Research Ethics Committee, Approval No. H-2017-0205.

Should you have concerns about your rights as a participant in this research, or you have a complaint about the manner in which the research is conducted, it may be given to the researcher, or, if an independent person is preferred, to the Human Research Ethics Officer, Research Services, NIER Precinct, The University of Newcastle, University Drive, Callaghan NSW 2308, Australia, telephone (02) 4921 6333, email Human-Ethics@newcastle.edu.au

Appendix C: Participant information statement attachment

Dr Kathleen McPhillips
School of Humanities and Social Science
University of Newcastle
Callaghan NSW 2308
Tel 0249215920
Fax 0249216933
Kathleen.Mcphillips@newcastle.edu.au

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE AUSTRALIA

Information Statement Attachment for the Research Project

Gen X Women and the Australia Catholic Church: Negotiating Religious Identity and Participation

Document Version 1.2; dated 27-Nov-17

Sample Research Questions

If you are to participate the researcher Tracy McEwan will conduct your interview, which will involve responding to questions relating to your experience and participation in the Catholic Church. These questions are meant to establish your level of involvement and engagement in the life of the Catholic Church and you will not be asked to relate details of any past trauma.

1. How would you describe your current involvement and participation in the Catholic Church?

2. Can you tell me the story of your participation in the Catholic Church, starting from childhood and working towards the present?

3. What were the key moments for you deciding to stay / leave?

4. Can you give me an idea of your level of satisfaction with the doctrine, structures, actions, and practices of the Catholic Church?

5. What elements of the Catholic Church's doctrine, structures, actions, and practices would you change if you could?

6. If the Church were to change and you felt that any obstacles to your participation were overcome, would you change your level of participation or involvement?

7. How do you perceive that your level of participation and involvement is different to your mothers or grandmothers?

8. You will be presented with two Catholic teachings. You will have the opportunity to ask questions about any language you do not understand. You will be asked: If you have seen the teaching before, what you understand the teaching to mean, and whether the teaching makes you want to increase or decrease your participation in the Catholic Church.

Appendix D: Project consent form

Dr Kathleen McPhillips
School of Humanities and Social Science
University of Newcastle
Callaghan NSW 2308
Tel 0249215920
Fax 0249216933
Kathleen.Mcphillips@newcastle.edu.au

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE AUSTRALIA

Consent Form for the Research Project

Gen X Women and the Australian Catholic Church: Negotiating Religious Identity and Participation

Researcher: Tracy McEwan

Document Version 1.4; dated 27-Feb-18

I agree to participate in the above research project and give my consent freely.

I understand that the project will be conducted as described in the Information Statement, a copy of which I have retained.

I understand I can withdraw from the project at any time, and do not have to give any reason for withdrawing.

I understand that by declining to participate in, or deciding to withdraw from, this research I will not suffer any negative consequences or any disadvantage.

I understand that religious participation can be a sensitive issue and there may be a possibility of experiencing emotional distress due to my participation in this research. Should distress occur counselling services can be accessed at Lifeline on 131144 (24 hour telephone counselling service) and Lifeline Face to face counselling service 02 4940 2000. The following websites also offer support and assistance: www.beyondblue.org.au; www.lifeline.org.au.

I understand that if I so chose, I can nominate a support person who, at my request, may be contacted should I experience distress during the interview.

I consent to participating in an interview and having it recorded. I understand the interview transcriber will have signed and be bound by a confidentiality agreement.

I understand that my personal information will remain confidential to the researchers, except as required by law.

I have had the opportunity to have questions answered to my satisfaction.

The expected completion date of this research is 2020.

I wish to receive a summary copy of the research results when available (*please circle*): YES / NO

My preferred method of delivery is (*please circle*) EMAIL/ POSTAL

Please provide further contact details (email address/postal address) for the researcher if you have selected to receive a copy of the results:

Contact Details: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix E: Identification screening questions

Document Version 1.1; dated 27-Nov-17

Engaged Catholic Women:

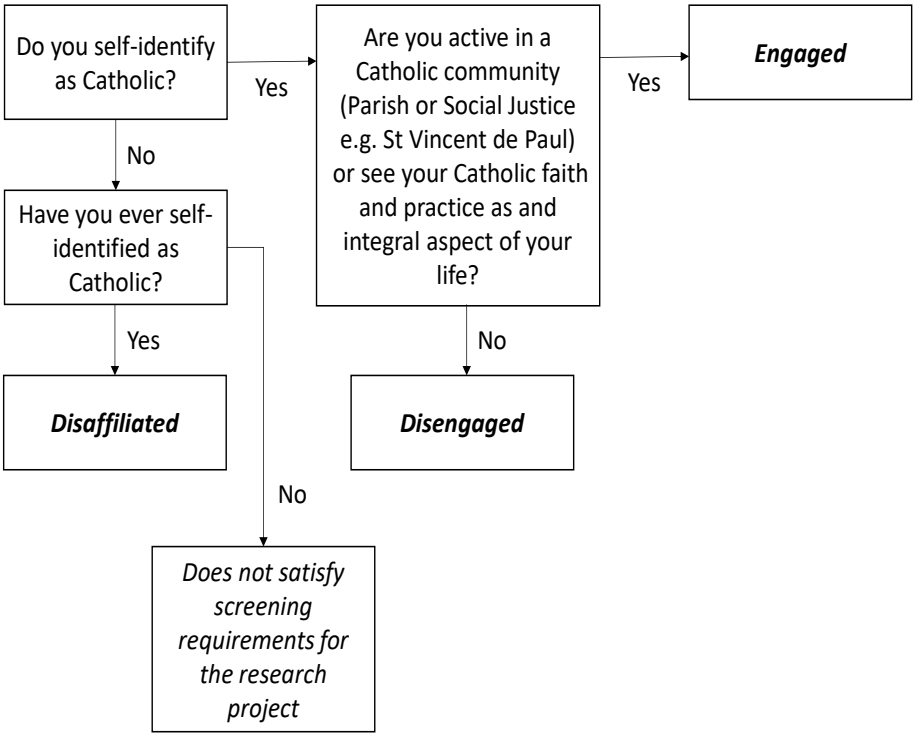
Self-identifying Catholics who indicate that their Catholic faith and practices are an important part of their lives

Disengaged Catholic Women:

Self-identifying Catholics who are loosely affiliated with the Catholic tradition

Disaffiliated Catholic Women:

Previously self-identifying Catholics and who have now ceased to identify as Catholic



Appendix F: Interview questions

Document Version 1.1; dated 27-Nov-17

Question 1

How would you describe your current involvement and participation in the Catholic Church?

Question 2

Can you tell me the story of your participation in the Catholic Church, starting from childhood and working towards the present?

Points for further investigation

- Schooling
- Participation in Sacraments
- Level of family involvement. Including parents, grandparents and children's schooling and participation in Sacraments
- Current involvement in Church life

Question 3

What were the key moments for you deciding to stay / leave?

Question 4

Can you give me an idea of your level of satisfaction with the doctrine, structures, actions, and practices of the Australian Church?

Points for further investigation

- Do you think your gender identity has influenced your level of satisfaction and involvement?

Question 5

What elements of the Catholic Church's doctrine, structures, actions, and practices would you change if you could?

Points for further investigation

- Why would you change these things?

Question 6

If the Church were to change and you felt the obstacles to your participation were overcome, would you change your level of participation or involvement?

Points for further investigation

- In what ways would your level of participation and/ or involvement change?

Question 7

How do you perceive that your level of participation and involvement is different to your mothers or grandmothers?

Points for further investigation

- In what ways is your involvement different to your siblings?

Question 8

Show the respondent two (of the six attached) Catholic teachings.

For each teaching:

The respondent will be asked if they prefer to read the statement or have it read to them. It will be emphasised that an academic or theological understanding is not required:

1. Is there any language in this teaching that you would like me to explain?
2. Have you seen this teaching before today?
3. What do you understand it to mean?
4. Does this teaching make you want to increase or decrease your participation in the Catholic Church?

One

[T]he Church is proud to have glorified and liberated woman, and in the course of the centuries, in diversity of characters, to have brought into relief her basic equality with man. But the hour is coming, in fact has come, when the vocation of woman is being achieved in its fullness, the hour in which woman acquires in the world an influence, an effect and a power never hitherto achieved (Paul VI 1965, para. 1).

Two

Lust is disordered desire for or inordinate enjoyment of sexual pleasure. Sexual pleasure is morally disordered when sought for itself, isolated from its procreative and unitive purposes. (CCC, para. 2351)

Three

Formal membership is not enough. Participation in the life of the Church means constant prayer, active participation in the liturgy, especially the Eucharist, regular reception of the sacrament of reconciliation, discernment and exercise of gifts and charisms received from the Holy Spirit, and active engagement in the Church's mission and in her diakonia. It presumes an acceptance of the Church's teaching on matters of faith and morals, a willingness to follow the commands of God, and courage both to correct one's brothers and sisters, and also to accept correction oneself. (SF para. 89)

Four

[Woman] is not only man's delight: she is the help, the security, the home man needs; she is the vessel of fulfilment designed for him. (Balthasar 1992, p. 285)

Five

[V]irginity and motherhood as two particular dimensions of the fulfilment of the female personality … acquire their full meaning and value in Mary, who as a Virgin became the Mother of the Son of God. These two dimensions of the female vocation were united in her in an exceptional manner, in such a way that one did not exclude the other but wonderfully complemented it. … Virginity and motherhood co-exist in her: they do not mutually exclude each other or place limits on each other (MD para. 17).

Six

Because women look at life through their own eyes and we men are not able to look at life in this way. The way of viewing a problem, of seeing anything, is different for a woman compared

Appendix G: Sample snowball email

Re: Research Project: *Gen X Women and the Australia Catholic Church: Negotiating Religious Identity and Participation*

Thank you for your interest in the research project being conducted by Tracy McEwan from the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Newcastle, NSW. The purpose of this research project is to explore the stories and experiences of Gen X women (born between 1965 and 1980) in Australia who currently or have previously identified as Catholic. If you are aware of any other women who may be interested in participating in this research, you may wish to pass on the attached flyer to them. This is entirely at your discretion, and you have no obligation to do so.

Appendix H: Letter to director of National Office for the Participation of Women

Dr Kathleen McPhillips
School of Humanities and Social Science
University of Newcastle
Callaghan NSW 2308
Tel 0249215920
Fax 0249216933
Kathleen.Mcphillips@newcastle.edu.au

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE AUSTRALIA

19th March 2018

Andrea Dean
Director
National Office for the Participation of Women
GPO Box 368
Canberra ACT 2601

Re: Research Project: *Gen X Women and the Australia Catholic Church: Negotiating Religious Identity and Participation*

Dear Ms Dean,

We seek to inform you of a research project which will conducted by Tracy McEwan from the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Newcastle, NSW.

The purpose of this research project is to explore the stories and experiences of Gen X women (born between 1965 and 1980) in Australia who currently or have previously identified as Catholic. It will seek to establish the reasons for their level of participation in parish and community life, and discover the factors contributing to the disengagement and disaffiliation of some Gen X Catholic women who have distanced themselves from the teaching and practices of the Catholic Church. It will investigate new forms of engagement that might assist the Catholic Church to partake in respectful dialogue with Gen X women regarding their participation. Tracy intends to find and interview appropriate women congregants in the geographic Catholic dioceses of Sydney, Perth, Maitland-Newcastle, Melbourne and Cairns and has sought the permission of the bishops of these dioceses. Further information regarding this research project may be found in the attached *Participant Information Statement*.

The research is part of Tracy's PhD studies at the University of Newcastle, supervised by Dr Kathleen McPhillips and Emeritus Professor Terry Lovat from the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Newcastle, NSW. This project has been approved by the University's Human Research Ethics Committee, Approval No. H-2017-0205

Yours sincerely,

Tracy McEwan and Kathleen McPhillips

Document Version 1.2; dated 27-Feb-18

Appendix I: Letter to bishops

Dr Kathleen McPhillips
School of Humanities and Social Science
University of Newcastle
Callaghan NSW 2308
Tel 0249215920
Fax 0249216933
Kathleen.Mcphillips@newcastle.edu.au

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE AUSTRALIA

27rd February 2018

<Bishop Name>
<Bishop Title>
<Bishop Address>

Re: Research Project: *Gen X Women and the Australia Catholic Church: Negotiating Religious Identity and Participation*

Dear Bishop Surname,

We seek to inform you of a research project which will conducted by Tracy McEwan from the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Newcastle, NSW. The purpose of this research project is to explore the stories and experiences of Gen X women (born between 1965 and 1980) in Australia who currently or have previously identified as Catholic. It will seek to establish the reasons for their level of participation in parish and community life, and discover the factors contributing to the disengagement and disaffiliation of some Gen X Catholic women who have distanced themselves from the teaching and practices of the Catholic Church. It will investigate new forms of engagement that might assist the Catholic Church to partake in respectful dialogue with Gen X women regarding their participation. Further information regarding this research project may be found in the attached *Participant Information Statement*.

This research is part of Tracy's PhD studies at the University of Newcastle, supervised by Dr Kathleen McPhillips and Emeritus Professor Terry Lovat from the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Newcastle, NSW. This project has been approved by the University's Human Research Ethics Committee, Approval No. H-
.

We ask your permission to find and interview appropriate women congregants in the diocese of <location>. Could you please respond to this request in writing to the above address?

Yours sincerely,

Tracy McEwan and Kathleen McPhillips

Appendix J: Replies from bishops

Reply from Archbishop Anthony C Fisher - Archbishop of Sydney

ARCHBISHOP'S OFFICE

16 May 2018

Dr Kathleen McPhillips
School of Humanities and Social Science
University of Newcastle
Callaghan NSW 2308

Dear Dr McPhillips and Mrs McEwan,

Thank you for your letter to Archbishop Anthony. I am sorry I haven't been able to reply sooner. The Archbishop has read your letter and asked me to convey his approval for you to interview the requested group of congregants within the Sydney Archdiocese for the purpose of postgraduate research.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

Kieran Walton
Private Secretary to Archbishop Anthony Fisher OP

329826 Level 16, Polding Centre, 133 Liverpool Street, Sydney NSW 2000, Australia
T +61 2 9390 5100 ✣ F +61 2 9261 0045 ✣ archbishop@sydneycatholic.org ✣ www.sydneycatholic.org

Reply from Archbishop Timothy Costelloe - Archbishop of Perth

ARCHBISHOP OF PERTH

24 May 2018

Dr Kathleen McPhillips
School of Humanities and Social Service
University of Newcastle
CALLAGHAN NSW 2308

Dear Professor McPhillips,

Thank you for your letter dated 19 March 2018 which arrived at my office during a very busy time prior to Easter. Since Easter I have also had extended absences from the Archdiocese attending to various bishops' meetings both interstate and overseas. I do apologise for the lateness of my reply.

I refer to your conversation with my Executive Assistant, Ms Jennifer Lazberger, and note you are asking for my approval for Ms Tracy McEwan to make contact and interview women in the Archdiocese of Perth in relation to her research project: *Gen X Women and the Australia Catholic Church: Negotiating Religious Identity and Participation.*

I have sought advice from the tertiary sector here in Perth and this advice has confirmed my intuition that neither Ms McEwan nor the university sponsoring her has any need of formal approval from me as the archbishop of Perth. While I do appreciate your courtesy in writing to me about this project, I believe that, given that this research project has been approved by the University of Newcastle's Human Research Ethics Committee, no further approval is needed. Obviously it will be up to each individual who is approached to decide whether or not they wish to participate.

Thank you once again for your consideration in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Most Rev Timothy Costelloe SDB DD
Archbishop of Perth

Address: Griver House, Catholic Archdiocese of Perth, 249 Adelaide Terrace, Perth WA 6000, Australia
Mailing Address: PO Box 3311, East Perth WA 6892
Telephone: +61 8 6104 3650
Facsimile: +61 8 6162 0234
Email: archbishop@perthcatholic.org.au
Website: www.perthcatholic.org.au

Reply from Bishop Greg O'Kelly – Acting Archbishop of Adelaide

From: Kathleen McPhillips
To: Heather Carey; Tracy McEwan
Subject: Re: Research Project Gen X women
Date: Thursday, 1 November 2018 3:14:03 PM
Attachments: image001.png
image002.png

Dear Heather

Thanks for your message and quick reply. I am cc-ing Tracy McEwan into this email so she can get in touch with you directly.
Tracy is undertaking the interviews as part of her PhD.

Best regards
Kath McPhillips

Dr Kathleen McPhillips
Program Convenor, Bachelor of Social Science
Vice-President, Australian Association for the Study of Religion

Sociology and Anthropology
University of Newcastle
Social Sciences Bld, Room W340
Tel 61 2 49215920
http://www.newcastle.edu.au/profile/kathleen-mcphillips

From: Heather Carey <HCarey@adelaide.catholic.org.au>
Sent: 31 October 2018 16:52:51
To: Kathleen McPhillips
Subject: Research Project Gen X women

Dear Dr McPhillips,
Bishop Greg O'Kelly has asked me to contact you in relation to your correspondence regarding the Research Project on Gen X Women and the Australian Catholic Church.

Bishop Greg O'Kelly has given his permission for you to find and interview appropriate women congregants in our Archdiocese, and I will be your contact person in the Catholic Archdiocese of Adelaide.

I shall wait to hear from you regarding the next steps in your process.

Thank you.

Kind regards,

Heather Carey

Reply from Bishop Robert McGuckin – Bishop of Toowoomba

From: Bishop's Secretary
Sent: Monday, 17 December 2018 11:48 AM
To: 'Kathleen McPhillips' <kathleen.mcphillips@newcastle.edu.au>
Subject: RE: INQUIRY RE RESEARCH PROJECT

Good morning

I checked with Bishop Robert regarding this. Advising that he did not need to do anything. He has advised okay for project to go ahead.

Kind Regards

Colleen Way
Secretary to Bishop Robert M. McGuckin

Bishops Office
PO Box 756
TOOWOOMBA QLD 4350

Tel: (+61) 07 4632 4277
Fax: (+61) 07 4639 2251
Email: Bishsec@twb.catholic.org.au
Website: www.twb.catholic.org.au

From: Kathleen McPhillips <kathleen.mcphillips@newcastle.edu.au>
Sent: Monday, 12 November 2018 9:25 AM
To: Bishop's Secretary <bishsec@twb.catholic.org.au>
Cc: Tracy McEwan <Tracy.McEwan@uon.edu.au>
Subject: INQUIRY RE RESEARCH PROJECT

Dear Colleen

My name is Dr Kathleen McPhillips and my PhD student TRACY MCEWAN is currently undertaking social research as part of her doctoral studies into the situation of Generation X women and Catholic identity across Catholic dioceses in Australia.

She wrote to Bishop McGuckin some weeks ago to request approval to interview Catholic women in the Toowoomba diocese.
I am attaching the original invitation and project description to this email.

I wonder could you let us know if the project has approval to move ahead?
And of course if you require further information I am happy to discuss the project, or supply further documents.

Best regards
Kathleen McPhillips

Dr Kathleen McPhillips
Program Convenor, Bachelor of Social Science
Vice-President, Australian Association for the Study of Religion

Sociology and Anthropology
University of Newcastle
Social Sciences Bld, Room W340
Tel 61 2 49215920
http://www.newcastle.edu.au/profile/kathleen-mcphillips

Reply from Bishop James Foley – Bishop of Cairns

Bishop's House
183 Abbott Street
Cairns Qld 4870

5th June 2018

Dr Kathleen McPhillips
School of Humanities and Social Science
University of Newcastle
CALLAGHAN NSW 2308
Kathleen.Mcphillips@newcastle.edu.au

Dear Kathleen,

Thank you for your letter from way back on the 19th March. My apologies for the delay in this written response.

I am happy to give you permission to you to find and interview appropriate women congregants in the Cairns diocese to help with your research project.

Cathy Spencer, Manager, Pastoral Support Services, whom I believe you have made contact with, may be able to assist you in making contact with appropriate persons.

Yours truly in Christ,

+ James Foley
BISHOP OF CAIRNS

P.O. Box 625 Cairns Qld 4870. Telephone (07) 4051 2071 Facsimile (07) 4031 4625

Reply from Bishop William Wright – Bishop of Maitland-Newcastle

OFFICE OF
BISHOP WILLIAM WRIGHT

Monday, 14 May, 2018

Dr Kathleen McPhillips
School of Humanities and Social Science
University of Newcastle
CALLAGHAN NSW 2308

Dear Kathleen,

Re: Research Project: ***Gen X Women and the Australia Catholic Church: Negotiating Religious Identity and Participation***

Thank you for your letter to Bishop Wright dated 19 March, 2018 in which you seek permission to find and interview appropriate women congregants in the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle re participation in the above Research Project.

Bishop Wright has no objection to your request, however, he would expect that there would not be any suggestion that the diocese itself was asking women to participate, but rather that they were clearly being asked to do so by the University of Newcastle.

We wish you every success in your endeavour, Kathleen.

Yours sincerely

Elizabeth Doyle
Executive Assistant to Bishop Wright

PS: Apologies Kathleen for the delay in responding but I broke my ankle and was away from the office for a time.

FOL15/5006/4

YEAR OF YOUTH 2018

CatholicDiocese OF MAITLAND-NEWCASTLE

Office 841 Hunter Street, Newcastle West 2302 PO BOX 780 Newcastle NSW 2300
Phone 02 4979 1109 **Fax** 02 4979 1338 **ABN** 91 605 046 457
Email bishopsoffice@mn.catholic.org.au **Visit us online** www.mn.catholic.org.au

Reply from Archbishop Denis Hart – Archbishop of Toowoomba

St Patrick's Centre
PO Box 146
East Melbourne Vic 8002
Australia

27 March 2018

Dr Kathleen McPhillips
School of Humanities and Social Science
University of Newcastle
CALLAGHAN NSW 2308

Dear Tracy and Dr Kathleen,

Thank you for your letter of 19 March 2018 concerning a research project on Gen X women and the Catholic Church.

On the understanding that this is private research and not for other purposes, I have no objection to you approaching women in the Archdiocese of Melbourne in connection with your survey. I would remind you however that the Catholic Church is not solely Australian Anglo-Saxon women and it would be important for authenticity to involve women from a variety of nationalities, as this is the composition of the Australian community.

With every good wish,

Yours sincerely in Christ,

ARCHBISHOP OF MELBOURNE

Appendix K: Human Research Ethics Committee approval

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE AUSTRALIA

Notification of Expedited Approval

To Chief Investigator or Project Supervisor:	**Doctor Kathleen McPhillips**
Cc Co-investigators / Research Students:	**Emeritus Professor Terry Lovat** **Mrs Tracy McEwan**
Re Protocol:	**Gen X Women and the Australian Catholic Church: Negotiating Religious Identity and Participation**
Date:	**05-Mar-2018**
Reference No:	**H-2017-0205**
Date of Initial Approval:	**05-Mar-2018**

Thank you for your **Response to Conditional Approval (minor amendments)** submission to the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) seeking approval in relation to the above protocol.

Your submission was considered under **Expedited** review by the Ethics Administrator.

I am pleased to advise that the decision on your submission is **Approved** effective **05-Mar-2018**.

In approving this protocol, the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) is of the opinion that the project complies with the provisions contained in the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research, 2007, and the requirements within this University relating to human research.

Approval will remain valid subject to the submission, and satisfactory assessment, of annual progress reports. *If the approval of an External HREC has been "noted" the approval period is as determined by that HREC.*

The full Committee will be asked to ratify this decision at its next scheduled meeting. A formal *Certificate of Approval* will be available upon request. Your approval number is **H-2017-0205**.

If the research requires the use of an Information Statement, ensure this number is inserted at the relevant point in the Complaints paragraph prior to distribution to potential participants You may then proceed with the research.

Conditions of Approval

This approval has been granted subject to you complying with the requirements for *Monitoring of Progress*, *Reporting of Adverse Events*, and *Variations to the Approved Protocol* as detailed below.

PLEASE NOTE:
In the case where the HREC has "noted" the approval of an External HREC, progress reports and reports of adverse events are to be submitted to the External HREC only. In the case of Variations to the approved protocol, or a Renewal of approval, you will apply to the External HREC for approval in the first instance and then Register that approval with the University's HREC.

- ***Monitoring of Progress***

Other than above, the University is obliged to monitor the progress of research projects involving human participants to ensure that they are conducted according to the protocol as approved by the HREC. A progress report is required on an annual basis. Continuation of your HREC approval for this project is conditional upon receipt, and satisfactory assessment, of annual progress reports. You will be advised when a report is due.

- ***Reporting of Adverse Events***

1. It is the responsibility of the person **first named on this Approval Advice** to report adverse events.
2. Adverse events, however minor, must be recorded by the investigator as observed by the investigator or as volunteered by a participant in the research. Full details are to be documented, whether or not the investigator, or his/her deputies, consider the event to be related to the research substance or procedure.
3. Serious or unforeseen adverse events that occur during the research or within six (6) months of completion of the research, must be reported by the person first named on the Approval Advice to the (HREC) by way of the Adverse Event Report form (via RIMS at https://rims.newcastle.edu.au/login.asp) within 72 hours of the occurrence of the event or the investigator receiving advice of the event.
4. Serious adverse events are defined as:
    - Causing death, life threatening or serious disability.
    - Causing or prolonging hospitalisation.
    - Overdoses, cancers, congenital abnormalities, tissue damage, whether or not they are judged to be caused by the investigational agent or procedure.
    - Causing psycho-social and/or financial harm. This covers everything from perceived invasion of privacy, breach of confidentiality, or the diminution of social reputation, to the creation of psychological fears and trauma.
    - Any other event which might affect the continued ethical acceptability of the project.

5. Reports of adverse events must include:
    - Participant's study identification number;
    - date of birth;
    - date of entry into the study;
    - treatment arm (if applicable);
    - date of event;
    - details of event;
    - the investigator's opinion as to whether the event is related to the research procedures; and
    - action taken in response to the event.

6. Adverse events which do not fall within the definition of serious or unexpected, including those reported from other sites involved in the research, are to be reported in detail at the time of the annual progress report to the HREC.

- ***Variations to approved protocol***

If you wish to change, or deviate from, the approved protocol, you will need to submit an *Application for Variation to Approved Human Research* (via RIMS at https://rims.newcastle.edu.au/login.asp). Variations may include, but are not limited to, changes or additions to investigators, study design, study population, number of participants, methods of recruitment, or participant information/consent documentation. **Variations must be approved by the (HREC) before they are implemented** except when Registering an approval of a variation from an external HREC which has been designated the lead HREC, in which case you may proceed as soon as you receive an acknowledgement of your Registration.

Linkage of ethics approval to a new Grant

HREC approvals cannot be assigned to a new grant or award (ie those that were not identified on the application for ethics approval) without confirmation of the approval from the Human Research Ethics Officer on behalf of the HREC.

Best wishes for a successful project.

Associate Professor Helen Warren-Forward
Chair, Human Research Ethics Committee

For communications and enquiries:
Human Research Ethics Administration

Research & Innovation Services
Research Integrity Unit
The University of Newcastle
Callaghan NSW 2308
T +61 2 492 17894
Human-Ethics@newcastle.edu.au

RIMS website - https://RIMS.newcastle.edu.au/login.asp

Linked University of Newcastle administered funding:

Funding body	Funding project title	First named investigator	Grant Ref

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

Notification of Expedited Approval

To Chief Investigator or Project Supervisor:	**Doctor Kathleen McPhillips**
Cc Co-investigators / Research Students:	**Emeritus Professor Terry Lovat** **Mrs Tracy McEwan**
Re Protocol:	**Gen X Women and the Australian Catholic Church: Negotiating Religious Identity and Participation**
Date:	**11-Oct-2018**
Reference No:	**H-2017-0205**

Thank you for your **Variation** submission to the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) seeking approval in relation to a variation to the above protocol.

Variation to include participants from Adelaide Archdiocese and Toowoomba Diocese.

- Recruitment Flyer (v1.6, dated 04/09/2018)
- Information Statement (v1.6, dated 04/09/2018)
- Letters to Toowoomba and Adelaide Diocese (v1.3, dated 04/09/2018)

Your submission was considered under **Expedited** review by the Ethics Administrator.

I am pleased to advise that the decision on your submission is **Approved** effective **11-Oct-2018**.

The full Committee will be asked to ratify this decision at its next scheduled meeting. A formal *Certificate of Approval* will be available upon request.

Associate Professor Helen Warren-Forward
Chair, Human Research Ethics Committee

For communications and enquiries:
Human Research Ethics Administration

Research & Innovation Services
Research Integrity Unit
The University of Newcastle
Callaghan NSW 2308
T +61 2 492 17894
Human-Ethics@newcastle.edu.au

RIMS website - https://RIMS.newcastle.edu.au/login.asp

Linked University of Newcastle administered funding:

Funding body	Funding project title	First named investigator	Grant Ref